WHEN I WAS A BOY IN PERSIA

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Youel Benyamin Mirza

WHEN I WAS A BOY IN PERSIA

BY

YOUEL B. MIRZA

ILLUSTRATED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

BOSTON
LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO.

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THIS BOOK, IN ALL ITS SIMPLICITY,
IS SINCERELY DEDICATED TO

WESTEL WOODBURY WILLOUGHBY,

MY PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
IN THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

PREFACE

The author had just returned from France, to be released from active service in the United States Navy, in which he enlisted during the Great War. While waiting to receive his final papers at the Bay Ridge Barracks, Brooklyn, N. Y., and to pass the time lightly, he began perusing a series of books written by native authors about the "Children of Other Lands." It was the enlightening and pleasurable reading that inspired him to write this story of his own boyhood days. It is hoped that this narrative, written by an imported citizen of the United States, not only will prove helpful and instructive, but will aid others also to pass pleasantly their lonely hours.

In the preparation of this book the

author has taken especial pains to spell the Persian names and terms as they are pronounced by the natives, and to tell briefly only of the habits, customs, mode of living, and what he himself heard, saw, and did when he was a boy in Persia.

Y. B. M.

Washington, D. C.

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WHEN I WAS A BOY IN PERSIA

I

MY FATHER AND MOTHER, THEIR PARENTS, THEIR CHARACTER AND CUSTOMS

My father and mother, their parents and parents' parents for generations, as well as myself, were born in Nazie, a small village in the fertile province of Azerbajin in northern Persia.

That my parents were in love with each other from their early days cannot be doubted. My mother often used to speak of her early love affair and of events which took place before her marriage to my father, but owing to the existing custom in Persia, where boys and girls never under any circumstances associate with each other, my mother never had an op-

portunity to express herself openly in this matter.

My parents had first seen each other by chance at the village spring or brook, where my mother was carrying an earthen jar full of fresh drinking-water for the use of the household, and my father was watering his Persian steed. They were perfectly suited to each other in looks, as my mother was beautiful and my father very handsome.

My mother and her younger sister were considered the best-looking girls in the province. Mother had an unusually light complexion for a Persian maiden; dark hair reaching far below her waist, hazel eyes, and dark eyebrows. Her figure was tall and slender as a cypress-tree. My father was short, with black hair, rosy cheeks, and piercing black eyes which made him unusually attractive and pleasing in appearance.

Most love affairs in Persia start in about the same way. It is customary to have

fresh drinking-water brought to the house at least twice a day, and this duty is usually assigned to young women. To the Persian boys sometimes falls the task of taking the cattle and horses to water. This is done about the same time the girls go to the spring, so not infrequently a love affair is started by a glance. I once saw a boy on the picturesque bridge of a brook gazing so hard at a girl that he lost his balance and fell overboard. Gazing, however, is about all the boys can do. They dare not speak to the girls, for that is considered a great insult and would result in a family quarrel.

My father, therefore, had no chances of saluting his sweetheart or of bestowing upon her gifts, except secretly. He would see her at times on the housetops, and, as he passed by, when no one was looking, he would toss boxes of candy up to her. Occasionally he would sing a Persian love song to inform her that he was in the neighborhood, but the only thing my mother

could do was to listen and keep the affair from the knowledge of her parents. Otherwise there would have been not only trouble for her, but my father would have been exposed to a great deal of danger and humiliation.

The love which existed between them to the last of their days, was, indeed, love at first sight. Although family friction kept them from taking matrimonial steps for some time, they never lost sight of each other, and whenever there was a chance of taking a glance or peeping through hedges or fences, the precious opportunity was not neglected.

Unwilling to keep up this kind of love affair indefinitely, my father finally informed grandfather of his desires, and requested that he ask the girl's father for her hand in marriage.

Being the youngest and favored son of his father, he almost invariably obtained anything that attracted his fancy. In this case, however, the gift he asked was too

precious, and his desire was beyond his father's wealth. Land, money, property and earthly ambitions were no consideration. The prominent factors concerned were those of caste, family, and religion. My father's parents, though wealthier, were not considered socially equal to my mother's family.

Castes and Differences

In Persia before a marriage can take place the equality of the parties is strictly considered. Caste, family, religion, character, fortune, profession, and beauty, all play an important part in the field of matrimony. On such grounds my two grandfathers differed.

Mother's father, Kasha Nweeya, was a clergyman by profession, and the best-informed man in the community. In the village in which the two families lived were three Christian churches,—Greek Catholic, Nestorian, and Presbyterian. The Catholic and Nestorian priests were painfully

ignorant. Neither of them could read or write. They merely memorized a few prayers written in the old Syriac or Latin languages, and every Sabbath they repeated them to their congregations. My maternal grandfather, being a Presbyterian, was not only highly educated but owned the only library in the village. This library consisted of a dozen or more religious books. The volumes, with the exception of a Syriac Bible were all manuscripts, bound in coarse leather, and looked like ledgers. My grandfather had three sons and two daughters. The sons were Lazarus, Yousuph, and Shimuel. Two of his sons were college graduates, and Yousuph looked after their land and stock. Rachel and Sara, his daughters, were also quite well educated. Rachel, who finally became my mother, was the oldest. Grandfather Nweeya, being the best-educated man in our community, was also the most highly respected. He had studied theology under the early Nestorian and

American teachers. He was ordained a clergyman at the age of eighteen, which profession he followed for nearly sixty years. Upon seeing him the villagers would stand up, and in passing he would say, "Peace be with you," and in answer they would all say, "On you be peace."

My paternal grandfather was different from mother's father in every respect. In the first place nature had endowed him with an imposing figure and physique. He was over six feet tall, and was fearless of everything and everybody. The town folk, when speaking of his strength, would say, "He is as strong as a buffalo." He had never been known in his manhood days to lose a wrestling match. He became mayor of the village as soon as he was able to command authority, which position he held till old age robbed him of his powers. He was known throughout the province as Mirza Pachow.[1] Sometimes he was known

[1] Pachow was my grandfather's father, who was known nearly all over Persia. He was probably one of

as Mirza Ketkhoda, which means the leader in the community.

Instead of carrying a Bible or a staff in his hand, like my mother's father, he carried a stout club. As he approached the villagers would say, "Mirza Pachow is coming," and they would all quickly rise and salute, saying, "Peace be with you." His answer would be quite arbitrary or according to his mood. He would either say, "On you be peace," or he would simply give them a stern glance and pass on. This grandfather had one daughter and three sons, Benjamin, Namatoe, and Moshie, who was my father. To his great sorrow, none of his sons ever patterned after him. They did not have the strength and physique to follow in his footsteps and preserve the family traditions as he had. He knew this quite well, and I remember that he often used to grieve over it.

the wealthiest and strongest men Persia had ever had. At one time he was summoned to the Court of Persia to wrestle with the champion wrestler of the country, in which match the Shah acted as referee.

His mode of dressing was most picturesque. He wore the usual Persian hat covered with lambskin; wide trousers, which came to his ankles; and a long and unusual overcoat. The inside was red and the outside blue, dotted all over with buttons. He had two brass buttons on each shoulder. Just why he wore these ornaments I am unable to say.

He used to make frequent trips to Kurdistan, and because of his bravery and fearlessness, he was greatly beloved by these bloodthirsty people. It was on that very account that, when the majority of people making trips to Kurdistan would come back robbed and bruised, grandfather Mirza would return with flocks of sheep, goats, and exquisite Kurdish rugs and tapestry. Some of these he bought, but most of them were given him as presents.

This man was generous to all boys, and I can safely say that he was the best-hearted man I have ever known. When I was sick with smallpox, I remember his

staying by my bedside day and night. In order to make me happy and forgetful of my sufferings, every day he would present me with pieces of money, and tell me stories of the Kurds.

He was generous to a fault. His home and stables were always open to everybody. When other village men were frightened almost into panic upon hearing that the Kurds were in the vicinity, grandfather would take the frightened men into his home and entertain them lavishly. Our village was on many occasions attacked by the Kurds, and several families who had expressed a dislike for my grandfather had their property and cattle stolen, but his house was never attacked.

His voice was tremendous and many men recognized him from a distance by his sonorous tones. When he shouted the village men would say, "The lions and bears from fear of his voice flee to the mountains and disappear."

This powerful, fearless, but lovable man

acted as a mediator between the Kurds and the city market-places. The Kurds always feared going to the city to sell their sheep, goats, wool, and rugs, lest they should be arrested by the Government officials, as practically all they had had been stolen, so these merchants would bring their commodities to my grandfather to sell. He would usually buy half of them and the other half they would give him as a present.

Upon one occasion I heard the following story with regard to him and the Kurds, and I believe it is quite accurate. He had bought what stock the Kurds had brought to him, and in order to sell it he went to Urumiah, a city of five or six miles from his own village. Unable, on account of the lateness of the day, to return, he spent the night in the home of some of his friends. That very night, the Kurds with their full force attacked the home in which he was staying, and finally forced their way within the gates of the yard. The family,

upon realizing that the dreaded robbers were about their house, became panic-stricken, but my grandfather simply called for his club. When the Kurds heard the unmistakable voice of Mirza Pachow they left the house, postponing their attack until some more favorable opportunity. As a matter of fact, they were not afraid of my grandfather for they had a big force, but he, being their friend, they considered it unmanly and un-Kurdish-like to attack the house in which he was making his abode for the night.

I have given this account of my paternal grandfather to show why a marriage connection between the two houses seemed impossible. The animosity which my two grandfathers held toward each other, besides being due to the Kurdish problem, was also, to a great extent, due to their religious differences. Had my paternal grandfather become a Presbyterian, as was the other, the affair of the marriage might have been easily arranged. But Mirza

THE KURDS.
The background is a Kurdistan rug.

Ketkhoda could not even understand the term Presbyterian. His parents had never talked of such a name, and he did not believe that Presbyterianism could either take him to heaven or send him to the place of eternal punishment, and if they really had such power, what about his forefathers? Were they to be lost for not being Presbyterians? He, of course, knew about Christianity and Christ, but he could not grasp the idea of associating Presbyterianism with Christianity.

In fact, in my grandfather's time, very few people in our country did grasp such an idea. Grandfather Mirza would not even listen to the teachings of a new doctrine. He believed in old wine, old friends, old religion, and he preferred to believe and die in the faith of his fathers. With the exception of my father, who really followed my mother rather than any religion, all of his sons refused to admit the missionaries to their homes. I distinctly remember one bright, sunny winter day,

while I was standing on the housetop, a missionary who was visiting my preacher grandfather, came to call and incidentally to convert the oldest brother of my father. Almost immediately after his entrance into the house, I saw him thrown to the yard, and from the yard into the street with Lotie Bashie [1] after him. My parents regretted the affair, but Grandfather Mirza was not only highly pleased over it, but expressed his feelings in such words as would not bear repetition here.

It can thus be seen why the two families did not want to associate with each other. My two grandfathers never exchanged gifts or greetings. They condemned one another to their friends most vigorously. My maternal grandfather, Rev. Nweeya, disliked the idea of connecting his name with one who, besides mistreating the missionaries, was a friend of the Kurds, and

[1] Lotie Bashie, which means "the head of the sports," was the name of the dog. In this connection, let me say that the missionary, who was doing his duty, was saved from the dog by a kind-hearted neighbor.

in return he was scoffed at by my father's father for his Apostolic ideas, and for preaching about what was going on in heaven. In all my life I never saw my two grandfathers together.

Of my two grandmothers, there is little to be said. They were both the heads of large families. Their word in their own home was law, and it did not take their children very long to find it out. They were both, however, very sympathetic and kind in nature. The name of my mother's mother was Monna, and I loved her next to my own mother. The grandmother on my father's side, I never saw, as she died the year I was born. Her name was Sheran, which means "Sweet," and from all I used to hear of her from my father, she possessed qualities which made her worthy of her name. It was told that my two grandmothers, unlike their husbands, always got along well together.

But my grandmothers had no power to make marriage settlements for their chil-

dren, and especially in the case of my parents, as Rev. Nweeya refused to have any relations with Grandfather Mirza. It was therefore decided that my mother should be taken by force. Her father was finally told that if his consent could not be obtained, his daughter would be kidnapped. He knew that this could easily be accomplished with a few Kurds. Grandfather Mirza could easily storm the house and take away the girl for his son.

Even now this practice is not rare. I remember quite well how one of my own relatives was kidnapped by the Kurds and given to her lover in Kurdistan.

This situation brought much uneasiness to the home of my mother. For fear of having her taken against her father's wishes, Grandfather Nweeya compelled her to stay at home guarded until she was finally taken to the city and married to some one who pleased his fancy. In the meantime my father, in order to drown his sorrows married some one else.

As fate would have it, the man whom my mother first married died within a year after their union. She therefore returned to her father's house, where she remained a widow for some years. In the meantime, the woman whom my father had married, also died, thus leaving the lovers free again.

This freedom seemed to be heaven's way of bringing my parents together, so the subject of matrimony between them was again renewed, even though the same difficulties that had barred them before remained, as her father still opposed the match. But my mother and father had by that time grown older; both having been married once, they had gained much experience and possessed some knowledge in judging human nature. So they wisely decided to follow the dictates of their own hearts. They were finally united in a happy marriage, for all of which I am indeed very grateful.

II

THE BIRTH AND CARE OF A CHILD

THE common idea prevailing in various countries as to the treatment of girls in Persia upon coming into this world has been greatly exaggerated. It is true that the birth of a boy brings more happiness to the family than that of a girl, but the mere fact that the mother has given birth to a daughter is no sign at all that the girl infant is to be persecuted.

The birth of a boy is, of course, an event of great importance in the life of young parents. In the first place the mother is practically a stranger in her mother-in-law's household, and bringing a son to her husband's family makes her doubly appreciated. In the second place the birth of a boy is more welcome because the son will soon grow up and be an addition to the

strength of the clan. Thirdly, the youngster is expected to succeed his father in his trade or profession and to perpetuate the memory of his family. On the other hand, the joy of the family is not so great at the birth of a daughter because the infant is expected to leave the family the day of her marriage and thus her connection with her father's house becomes of less importance than that of a boy.

When a baby is born the friends, neighbors, and relatives begin to pour in and congratulate the young parents. Upon the birth of a boy the family begins to entertain friends most lavishly. The samovar (the brass teapot) is all the time boiling to the brim. No one comes in or goes out without drinking some good tea and eating the sweet nokhols (candy). On such occasions the village poor are always remembered. Being too poor to pay their calls [1] to the home where a new light has

[1] As every caller must bring a present the poor naturally refrain from paying any visits on such occasions.

dawned, members of the happy family take to them wheat, flour, cloth, raisins, and nuts. They eat and drink, give praise to Allah, petitioning him to prolong the life of the mother and her child and to soon give the family another son.

When the callers are through with their visits they depart with the following exclamation: "May the foot [1] of your maid be blessed and may God preserve her to you. We hope the next one may be a boy!" Should the infant be a boy they say: "May the foot of your young man be blessed. May God spare him to you and make him like hair that is never exhausted, but grows again when cut or pulled out. May Allah not think one son enough for you."

No Birth Records

Among the Persians, birth records are hardly ever kept. The children therefore

[1] That is, "May her coming into the world be a blessing."

have no birthdays or birthday parties and presents. The only way that they can tell the age of a child is by associating the day or the year of the birth with some great event. For instance, should a boy be born a few days before or after Christmas or around about Easter or during the Nourooz (New Year) festival, there will, of course, be no trouble in keeping his age straight. But should the child be so unfortunate as to be born at the time when there is no saint celebration, festival, or big event he will have to go through life without really knowing his age.

The age questions do not enter their minds and people are only as old as they feel and no one worries about his age or thinks that age is "against him." Such was the case of my paternal grandfather. No one knew his age. Some thought that he lived over a hundred and fifteen years, others claimed that he died at the ripe age of one hundred and five years. Every one, however, agreed that he lived in his vil-

lage over a hundred years. There was really no way of determining his correct age. But one thing is certain, that from what I remember of him he lived to be a very, very old man. On account of his great age he remained in his bed for nearly four years before his death and had to be waited on. Being too feeble to start his pipe I used to start it often by taking the first few puffs; when I finally had the pipe ready I would put it in his hands; he would then bless me and call me "Azizim" (beloved).

Receiving a Name and Title

When a boy is eight days old he is given a name. At the celebration of this rite the mullah (the priest) performs religious ceremonies by reading the Koran and finally giving the child the name desired by his parents. In the case of a girl there are no religious ceremonies. Her name is chosen by her parents and is given to her by a woman relative. The procedure

is quite simple. The infant girl is taken in the arms and her name is whispered in her ear three times, i.e., by saying to the girl three times, "Fatima, Fatima, Fatima —that is your name." The fortunate young lady therefore will forever have the favored name of Fatima.

The child, as well as a grown-up man, is always known and called by the first name. For instance, if a boy's name is John, and his father's name is Albert, the boy is known as John bar, or Ben Albert, i. e., John after, or son of Albert. Very few have surnames, for there are no family names in Persia to hand down from one generation to another. Upon marrying, the girls never change their names. If a young lady's name was Almas bar Abdullah before her marriage, she would be known as such ever after. There is no word in the Persian vocabulary corresponding to the English word, "Mrs." In the higher grade of society a woman is known as "Khanum," meaning lady. If she is

married to a man by the name "Mustafah" she would be known as Mustafah Khanum.

The most common names in Persia are Ali, Hassan, Hosein, Gula and Abdul. Nearly ten per cent of the Persian boys are named Ali, and an equal number bear the name of Hassan and Hosein, etc. They are very fond of combining these names. One boy will be known as Abdul Hassan, and should his father have a title such as "Khan," he will be known as Abdul Hassan Khan. Should he become proficient in his studies to the extent of being able to read and write well he will be known as "Mirza." Therefore his full name would be Mirza Abdul Hassan Khan. There are several other names and titles a boy can have by making pilgrimages with his parents to various holy places. He can add the title of Meshadie by visiting the Mosque of Imam Riza at the city of Meshad, or that of Hadji [1] by going to Mecca

[1] Hadji is the highest and most coveted religious title a Mohammedan can have. This and other religious titles

and circling seven times the tomb of the Prophet Mohammed.

The girls, not being able to travel, do not possess any religious titles. Often one will marry a Hadji or will induce her parents to take a journey so that she can boast about it.

The most favored girl names in Persian are Fatima, Almas, Sheran, Lalla, and Cadija. The number of girls named after Fatima, the famous daughter of Mohammed, is greater than that of all other girls put together.

The Evil Eye

Persian children are extremely healthy, and if they had the modern scientific methods in dealing with various epidemics there would be indeed very little sickness among them.

The evil eye is always held responsible for a child's sickness, when really the ill-

are never inherited. In order to be obtained, the pilgrimage must be made by the person himself.

ness is caused by the ignorance of mothers, grandmothers, and nurses; the latter's influence being the most predominating factor in a Persian household.

Through the ignorance of their parents, the children are often subject to cruel treatment. I have seen with my own eyes little babies being bathed with cold water alongside a brook when the water was really too cold to drink. When the baby, from being exposed to cold weather, had pneumonia, the evil eye was blamed because some one had seen the beautiful figure of the infant being bathed and had forgotten to say "Mashallah." [1]

In order to frighten the unseen spirits the village folk stick on poles the skulls of animals and dress them up to look like half men and half beasts.

To avoid the evil eye, strangers must not see the face of a baby for at least three months after its birth, and as soon as pos-

[1] To protect the child from all these calamities the word "Mashallah" (God be Praised) must be repeated twice.

sible a priest must be consulted with regard to the safety of the child. In order to prevent a youngster from being molested by the evil eye the priest writes a prescription in Arabic made up with prayers and verses from the Koran. The document is then neatly folded and sewed in a little bag dotted with blue beads and fastened on the infant's right arm.

Sometimes it was advisable to dress the youngster in very unbecoming clothes and keep it as unattractive as possible, for fear, if he should look too handsome, the unseen spirits might cause his sickness and death. I have seen ignorant parents fill a baby's eyes for several days after it was born with black powder. They believed by doing this the infant's eyes got stronger and more beautiful as they grew older.

The precaution taken against the evil eye and unseen spirits are not by any means limited to what has been just said. It is thought to be very dangerous to leave children alone for fear that devils may

take them away. One way of preventing the children from being kidnapped by unseen spirits, they say, is to throw a man's trousers on them. When the babies are left alone they believe that genii will come and nurse them.

The following story illustrates the fear a mother entertains in her breast of devils and unseen spirits, and will perhaps make clear to the reader the great amount of stupidity and superstition still existing among the Christian inhabitants of Persia. An infant was not quite old enough to be left alone in the house for fear that one of the evil genii might take it away. It happened, however, that the mother of the baby found it necessary to pay a visit to some of her neighbors, and not having a nurse to care for the baby in her absence the question as to how the infant was to be cared for required a great deal of thought. Should the mother take it with her and expose it to the public eye? This she considered as dangerous as to leave

it alone in the house. The mother finally decided to leave it at home, and as a protection against the genii she placed on its breast a piece of bread, a pair of scissors, and a picture of Christ, and departed. Upon her return she was greatly surprised and amazed at the fact that the baby was not to be found where she left it. She began screaming, pulling her hair and shouting like a lunatic for fear the evil genii had stolen the baby. The fact of the matter was that the healthy youngster had rolled around and around until it was stopped by a big sack of flour and there it stayed hidden from his mother's eye. After carefully searching her house the mother found the baby behind the bag and just about that time the cock crowed, which was a warning sign. The next day she reported the case to the village priest by whom she was informed that the evil genii would steal children when they were not properly cared for by their parents, and that, "if you had

not found it before the cock crew, you would never have seen it again!" The priest finally went to her home and by mentioning the name of Christ and the Cross, and by offering certain prayers, he drove away the intruders and thus prevented the genii from making a second attack on the child.

Sickness and Epidemics

Due to various epidemics, the life of a child is in great danger. The diseases which prevail in Persia are the ordinary diseases that one has in the United States. They are, however, more prevalent in Persia and appear in most aggravated forms.

Thousands of children, through not being vaccinated, die every year from smallpox. The year I had it several of my playmates died with this loathsome disease, but through my mother's gentle and tender treatment my life and my body were spared from its effects. In order to prevent me from being marked she tied my

hands and kept me from scratching myself.

Besides smallpox, children are affected with diphtheria, cholera, whooping cough, tuberculosis, nervous and mental ailments, all forms of eye trouble, and the ordinary fevers. Not having any maternity hospitals in Persia, naturally thousands of babies die on account of not being properly attended.

The treatment and suffering of children are due to the ignorance rather than to the fault of their parents. When children are ill they are never neglected or unattended. I have known parents to stay up all night watching over their sick child, and nothing was omitted by them that would reduce the suffering. I can frankly state that during my boyhood days in Persia I never saw mistreatment of children by their parents, and neither have I witnessed a man dragging his wife's name in the courts or molesting her in any way. In fact the men are extremely kind to their families. To corroborate this statement

let me quote a few words of Dr. John G. Wishard, who lived and practiced medicine in Persia for over twenty years. He says: "Near by the hospital was a young mother who took cholera and her husband cared for her with great tenderness and thoughtfulness, but in spite of all that was done for her she grew rapidly worse. Finally she declined to take medicine and her husband, in his extreme anxiety for her recovery, remarking that the medicine was pleasant, put to his lips the spoon which she had been using. In a few hours he developed the disease, and in order to hide from his wife his own illness he excused himself by saying that he must go to inquire concerning the welfare of his father's household. He died a few hours after his wife's death, without knowing that she had gone on before. They were buried with their new-born baby a few hours later."

The epidemics in Persia come quite frequently, and their control is almost im-

possible, consequently when a child is born the parents, from the time of its birth until the baby has reached the age of ten years, look forward to these epidemics and ponder in their sadness how they can avoid them or cope with them. However, once a child has passed this dangerous age its troubles are almost over, and it is practically assured a long life.

III

SCHOOL-DAYS

EDUCATION in Persia is far from being neglected. Mosques and Madrassas (common schools) are in every village, and the boys are encouraged by their parents and friends to study and to become good students. There are, however, no scientific institutions of learning, and neither is there a college in Persia worthy of its name. On that account a great many Persian boys go abroad to study.

In the afternoons, after school hours, frequently I used to meet a Mohammedan nobleman [1] who would stop me on my way

[1] His name was Ahmad Riza and he had obtained the coveted Persian title, Khan, from the Shah of Persia. He was quite friendly with our family and often used to bring some fine tobacco to my grandfather. He claimed to have some knowledge of medicine. When my father was ill he made frequent trips to our house and gave his

home and question me as to the progress I was making in school and the subjects I was studying. This gentleman was a fine Turkish scholar. He would occasionally prevail upon me to read my Turkish lesson to him. If I read well enough to suit his fastidious Turkish style, he would give me as a bakshish (present) a few Persian pennies, and pat me on the back saying, "Mashallah, Mashallah!" On the other hand, if I did not read as well as I should, he would say, "Inshallah, (in the name of God) you will do better next time."

The Persian boys have, as a matter of fact, a great respect for their teachers, even though they are frequently punished with bastinado[1] and often very badly

patient opium to smoke. He thought opium was the greatest cure for all sickness.

[1] The bastinado is a mode of Persian punishment used for all kinds of crimes, by Government officials and by teachers as well. In the schools the culprit's feet are placed in two round holes in a wooden board, and he is punished on his bare feet. The number of strokes is regulated according to the misdemeanor.

whipped. They look upon it more or less as a natural punishment because the youngsters are taught in their homes to respect age and consider themselves the property of their teacher while they are studying under him.

Starting to School

There is no special age for children to start to school, as it all depends on their parents. I, personally, do not remember the day I began my studies.

It is customary for parents to take the children to school the first day to introduce them to the teacher. After their parents get through telling the teacher about the methods he should employ in training the boys, most of them feel sorry that they are old enough to go to school. For, when they deliver their child to the gentle keeping of the professor the parents say, "We have brought our boy to your school. His bones are ours, but his flesh is yours. Teach him and punish him as you see fit."

THE BASTINADO.

Due to the cruel treatment of the teachers there is no joy and gladness among the Persian boys at the opening of the school year such as one sees in America.

My Early Ideas and Studies

The principal studies taught in our school were reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, geography, languages, religions, and poetry. Of the poetry the Persians study most fervently and zealously the "Gulistan" of Sadi. The "Gulistan" (Rose Garden) teaches lessons of morality and wisdom. It is the work next to the Koran, and is a moral guide to the Persian youth. If two students were in conversation, it would not take long even for one who knew nothing about the Persian language, to detect the name of Sadi. "Sadi guft," or "Sadi says," is used very frequently in their speeches. Here are some of the poet's famous phrases: "There is no better ornament for the ignorant than silence, and did he but know this he would

not be ignorant." "A learned man without practice is a bee without honey." "A student without the inclination to learn is a lover without money," and, "A devotee without learning is a house without a door."[1]

Other poetical works taught to a Persian student are those of Hafiz, Fardausi, Nizami, Rumi, and Jami. The works of *gafer* (ungodly) Omar Khayyam, with the exception of those dealing with astronomy and mathematics, are hardly ever taught. I frankly confess that, while in Persia, I was not acquainted with his famous Rubaiyat. In fact I was quite surprised to find my countryman so popular in America.

My favorite studies were religion and geography, because there was so much mystery connected with both of these subjects. When my schoolmaster told me that this world was round and that the sun and the moon did not move, my immediate atti-

[1] See Mr. Edward B. Eastwick's English translation of the "Gulistan" of Sadi.

tude toward him was that of a "man from Missouri." I wanted to be "shown." The mere fact that he placed the globe in front of me was no proof. To me the world was flat, and, as I gazed at the blue sky and saw the canopy of the heavens touching the earth, I conceived the idea that if one would go far enough he would actually touch the sky and could go no farther. Also I could see no reason for big oceans, as no man lived on them, and they were not used for irrigation purposes.

My childish idea of God was similar to that of John Fiske when he was a boy. I pictured the Almighty as a handsome, powerful man, with a long white beard and hair, and exquisite robes of all colors embroidered with gold and silver, sitting on the golden throne holding a long staff and judging mankind. I also thought that he saw, knew, and heard everything and everybody, and if I did wrong or disobeyed my parents I would be displeasing the Almighty and I would have to answer for it

on the day of Judgment.[1] The latter idea has never left me.

The different religious teachings and sects were a mystery to me. My mother's father being a Presbyterian clergyman, I, of course, became Presbyterian. At a very early age I began going to my grandfather's church. I was never sent to the Sunday school, but, to be sure that I got there, my mother always took me with her.

When old enough I used to ask my grandfather why he called himself and the rest of the family Presbyterians and what the significance of this word was. His answer would be that I was too young to ask such questions. "If I am too young to ask such questions," I would then say to him, "don't you think that I am also too young to be a Presbyterian?" When I insisted he would scold and rebuke me and discourage me from asking any theological questions.

The most perplexing question in my whole school-days in Persia was that of

[1] Cf. John Fiske, "The Idea of God," p. 116.

evolution. I often used to wonder to myself why this world was created. As a child I feared death dreadfully, and I could not understand why my mother, who was so kind and so pretty, would some day have to die.

I used to wish that I could be among the stars and see how they were fastened to the sky. The question as to how the rain, snow, and the round hail were made, also perplexed me. And, as I looked day after day on the Kurdish mountains and always found them on the same spot, I used to wonder why they were not moving, and if they were not tired of standing still so long. There being so many in the same row, I wondered whether they were friends and understood each other and, if not, why they were so grouped, some large and some small.

I used to feel very sorry for flowers. To see them, in the spring of the year, blooming and looking beautiful, and then, within a few days, all withered, was to me very

pathetic. I loved the wild flowers to such an extent that I would refrain from picking them. Persia is noted for its roses and hyacinths. The flowers are seldom cultivated but grow wild everywhere in beauty and in great variety. Graveyards in the Persian villages are full of wild flowers and thorns, but the boys would not attempt to pluck a rose in such a place.

My language studies were comparatively easy. The languages taught were Turkish, Syriac, Persian Arabic and English, and, when a boy finished his education he was pretty well acquainted with almost all of these languages.

My Mother's Only Punishment of Me

My parents always favored the Persian teacher's method of using the rod, and whenever I reported the teacher for punishing me I was, of course, told that it was my fault and that I deserved it. I distinctly remember one cold winter day when, after I had received what I thought to be

an unjust punishment, I fled from school and went home. Knowing what might happen, I was unwilling to tell my mother the cause of my being out of school so early. She, however, pressed me for the reason. I finally confessed, and furthermore I said I did not intend to go back to school and study under the same teacher that had punished me with a switch. I soon found that I had made these remarks to the wrong person. The fact that I was out of school before it closed was, according to my mother, sufficient evidence of my guilt. She sent me out of the house immediately and advised me to go to my schoolmaster and apologize. Instead I persisted in staying in the yard and debating about what I should do. But my leaving the school and then disobeying her orders displeased my mother immensely, so she came out and without my expecting it, threw me in the newly fallen snow, and gave me her best and her only punishment and sent me back to our little seminary.

There was no use then to tell Father about the affair, because, whenever Mother scolded me, I not only never received any sympathy from him, but, for some reason, he was always pleased, and laughed at my misfortunes. I really believe that the cause of his enjoyment over my being scolded by my mother was jealousy, as I was always in the way when he wanted to love my mother, because I wanted to love her myself.

Therefore there was nothing more for me to do but go to the school and face the tyrant. When I entered the room there was a great silence. No one, for fear of the teacher, looked at me, except the schoolmaster himself, and he gave me a chagrined look and an unpleasant smile. Realizing my position because of the existing sentiment in my home I went (to the disappointment of all the pupils) and humbly apologized. The boys could not understand my attitude. They were all looking for some one to break up the school and

humiliate the teacher. In fact, had I gone in the beginning to one of my uncles, who had no education and who really despised any kind of teaching, there is no doubt that the boys' hopes would have been realized.

This teacher, even though we are taught by our parents to respect him, was indeed a very cruel man. He used to whip the boys on the palm of the hand, and, if the switch broke in the course of punishment, the young culprit was made to go out in the yard and bring a new stick with which he received further switching. No one dared to withdraw his hand when he was ordered to hold it out, for, if the boy withdrew his hand, burning from the effect of the switch, he would be whipped on the back and legs. The boy that was thus being punished would twitch right and left but would not cry or yell, for that would not have been manly. The worst of it was that this teacher continued to be our master for a long time. He, finally, to the joy

of everybody, and for his own good, decided not to return to our school. By that time some of the boys had grown older and stronger and had decided, if he raised a switch on any of them in the future, that they were going to thrash him right in the schoolroom.

The causes for punishing the pupils were trifling in comparison with the severity of the punishment. For every misspelled word or unprepared lesson, as well as for every mischievous eye or idle look, a punishment was given. When I did not know my lessons, which frequently happened, to escape punishment I played sick and not having a doctor to verify my symptoms my ruse invariably worked very well. But at meal time, suddenly I would change from a very feverish boy to a healthy individual with great appetite.

At the age of fifteen I had practically mastered all the subjects offered by our village school. My greatest progress was made during the period when my cousin

was the master of our school and reduced the whipping of the boys to a minimum.

The Method of Teaching, the Teacher's Pay, and the School Hours

There were no chairs or desks in our school. The pupils usually sat on reed matting in two rows, one along one wall and the other row on the opposite side, with the teacher in the center of the room, close to the stove or the fireplace.

A short distance from our school there was a little Mohammedan seminary. In studying they would rock back and forth, droning aloud in a singsong fashion. Sometimes one could hear them a block away. But our method of study was patterned after the American institutions, and if any one studied aloud it was considered a misdemeanor. The Mohammedan boys, on the other hand, asserted that studying aloud helped them to remember their lessons.

All the boys, except of course when

studying English, read and wrote from right to left. Not having any desks we put our left knee on the floor and our right one up as a rest for our papers or our little blackboard.

In Persia the teachers are very poorly paid. In fact my teacher never received as a salary more than ten dollars a month. His board did not cost him much, however, as he was usually entertained by some of his pupils' families, and the cruel teacher's presence in the homes of his pupils was extremely offensive to the students. On the other hand, if he were good and kind to them they would frequently go without playing and without things that they enjoyed in order to be in their homes while their teacher was entertained by the family.

In some Persian schools where the teacher receives no salary, each student pays him from five to twenty-five cents a month, and those who can not pay are ad-

A Persian School.

mitted free. The schoolmaster's food is also provided by his pupils.

With the exception of a few missionary schools there are no Persian schools for girls. Consequently when a girl in our village received any education at all it was from private tutors.

There were no timepieces in our schools, and neither were there any school bells. The teacher called the students in whenever it suited his convenience. The students were first informed as to the time their school started in the morning by the sound of the wooden school-board. The board was about six inches wide and twelve inches long, and about an inch thick. When it was time for school to commence the board was held by a handle with the left hand and was given successive strokes with a wooden school tokhmokh (hammer) held in the right hand. As soon as the boys heard the sound of the school-board they would begin to go in at once.

The school hours were from eight or nine A. M. to two or three in the afternoon and, not having any clocks, the time was naturally observed by the position of the sun. During the day, besides our lunch hour, we had two short recesses. Saturday mornings we had to go to school, so as weekly holidays we had only Sunday and half of Saturday. The Mohammedans and the Jewish boys, being of different faith, had Friday and Sunday for their holidays.

The school year was about eight months long, and sometimes even longer. But if one desired to continue his studies he could go to school all the year around, with the exception of six hot weeks in summer. I remember attending even a summer school in Persia, and not being old enough to go by myself as the school was a good distance from my home, I was accompanied by my mother or by some one else.

Our school celebration came in May. Every one looked upon that day with a

great deal of joy and anticipation. The boys prepared for it weeks beforehand. They memorized poetry and took part in a play prepared by the teacher. On such occasions their parents, friends and neighbors, and the town dignitaries were present. Every pupil tried to obtain more applause than his comrades at these performance. Once, however, the celebration was over, the students quickly packed their books under their arms and went home rejoicing.

IV

PERSIAN GAMES, AMUSEMENTS AND MASSALIE (STORIES)

THERE are a great many games played in Persia, but I am going to describe only those in which I actually took part and which are played mainly by the boys.

Hat in the Ring

"Hat in the Ring" is played in the fall of the year in orchards and in hayfields. We first made a circle two or three feet in diameter, then we tossed up a coin, and the one that lost threw his hat in the ring and stood with one foot touching the edge of the circle, guarding it. The boys would then try to kick the hat and knock it out. The owner, in order to protect his hat, had to touch the boy who was kicking it. When

the hat is kicked out of the ring every boy in the game takes a crack at it (just like playing hockey in America), until the owner saves his hat by running after the boys and touching the last one who gave his hat a kick.

The game is thus kept up until the boys get tired or until they are stopped by their parents. The latter did not like the game because it was so destructive to hats.

On account of our parents' objections we were not allowed by our teacher to play it at school, but as soon as school was out we went into a field and some boy's hat, after the necessary matching, went into the ring.

My own parents strongly objected to this game. As I was the only child, they bought me fine black hats covered with Persian lambskin. In the summer a Persian wears silk caps, or sometimes, a Turkish fez. These hats were too expensive and fragile for the game. The hat that was most suitable for the purpose was

a very unattractive hard felt hat, usually worn by the farmers. I remember one evening, after playing "Hat in the Ring," I went to my mother with mud up to my knees and my good hat ruined. Naturally I was scolded, and told that if I wanted to play Borkum topa (Kick the Hat) I would have to wear the Persian felt hat. To that arrangement I immediately consented. I preferred wearing a felt hat and playing the game to wearing a fine hat and watching the boys play.

The worst thing about this game was, that no one could use a hat other than the one that he was wearing. One time one of the boys pulled out an old cap from his pocket and placed it in the ring. The boys considered that unfair and he was therefore ruled out of the game.

To a Persian, a hat is the most sacred article of his wearing apparel. There is nothing that will cause a boy to declare war on one of his playmates, or anybody else, for that matter, sooner than to have

his hat knocked off his head. To submit to such an act would reflect upon his manliness to such an extent as positively to keep him awake at night until he had taken his vengeance. I distinctly remember running after my own father, with my little fist clenched, because he had knocked my hat off. Had he not moved faster than I did there is no doubt but that there would have been trouble in the family. To make everything all right, he approached me after I had completely calmed down and promised me a new suit of clothes.

Wrestling

Wrestling is to the Persian boys and men what baseball is to the Americans. It is their national sport and every male takes part in it when young. There are a great many tricks used by the participants. They tell all kinds of tales in connection with champion wrestlers. One is as follows: One of the champions, having wrestled so long, had acquired three hun-

dred and sixty tricks. He taught a favorite pupil all of them except one. After that the pupil, conscious of his great strength, boasted to everybody that not even his professor dared offer him a match. Unable to stand the humiliation the teacher challenged him. An extensive ring was prepared for the occasion and the Shah and all the wrestlers of state attended the match. The youth first entered the arena. He was strong and healthy, but his boyish appearance made an instant appeal to every spectator and the cry arose, "Save him, save him!" The young wrestler laughed at them, however, and demanded to proceed with the match. Then came the champion, who plainly showed that his age was against him. The audience then changed their minds and feared that for him to tackle the young giant was an act of folly. The champion realized that his pupil was superior to him in strength, but there was his trick, and that was his only hope. He therefore

Persian Wrestlers.

attacked his pupil with the hold which he had kept for himself. The youth, not being able to cope with this trick, was lifted from the ground and thrown flat on his back. Thus the champion retained his title, "The Great Professor of Wrestling."

In Persia they have a saying, "Put not yourself so much in the power of your friend that if he should be disposed to be inimical he may be able to effect his purpose." And have you not heard what was said by a sage who had suffered injury from one whom he had educated? "I never taught any one the art of archery who, in the end, did not make a target of me." The Persian boys, because of this, never teach a new wrestling trick to anybody. A good wrestling trick is one of the most valued possessions of a boy.

We used to wrestle in the winter on the housetops, and, in the summer, in the hayfields. Wherever there were three or four boys together a wrestling match would usually begin. The older boys and men

made the matches by selecting the boys according to their age and strength. There was only one boy in our village near my own age whom I could not throw. He was a thorn in my flesh. I often used to stay awake at nights hoping and praying that I could defeat him. I was not the only one that worried over it. My father used to scold me. My uncles, and especially my grandfather Mirza, who expected me to follow in his footsteps, were much concerned over it. Curious as it may seem, when training I used to eat all kinds of sweets and highly seasoned food, but with all that, the envied boy still held the wrestling championship in the town.

The wrestling matches among the men are very serious, as one fall may rob a young man of the girl whom he wants to marry. The girls know the boys only by their families and by their strength. The young man who is a champion wrestler is naturally the talk of the town, and, in fact, very few girls would refuse to marry him.

The Persian wrestlers take such a keen interest in this sport that they would not let a stranger who boasts of his strength pass through their town without challenging him to a bout. Some years ago one of the English circus companies was making a tour of Persia. In Teheran one of its members used a trick which gave the impression that he was the strongest man in the world. He took a mat full of nails (which were, incidentally, rubber), and, spreading it on the floor, he lay on it. Then an elephant was brought in and made to kneel over the man, giving the impression that the animal was being supported by him. The whole trick was accomplished without injury to the trickster. Upon seeing this one of the Persian wrestlers, called Lotie Bashie (head of the sports) immediately challenged him. The crowd cheered and shouted, but the trickster refused the challenge, which broke up the whole performance.

Tops and Marbles

The top-spinning season comes in winter and is looked forward to by the boys with a great deal of pleasant anticipation. The tops are made of Persian walnut and are similar in shape to those used by American boys. The only difference is that Persian tops are a little larger and flat at the top. In playing the game, the boys first give their tops to one of the players. He takes them in both hands and tosses them in the air. The top that does not fall on its flat surface is left for the boys to pick on. The players hold their tops in their left hands, and a cord attached to the third finger of the right hand is wrapped around the tops. Then, from a distance of five or six feet they whirl the top with the right hand at the one on the ground. If they miss it they lift their top with two fingers and quickly placing it, while spinning, in the palm of the hand try again to touch the other top. If one

is unable to strike the top aimed at, or fails to touch it with his top while it is spinning in the palm of his hand, he must put his own on the ground to be picked on by the other tops. I have seen tops go into the game beautifully varnished and painted with all the colors of the rainbow, but, after the game, they looked as if they had been through a bad case of smallpox. Frequently, in the course of the game, tops were made useless by having the spinning nail knocked out of them.

The top games are usually played on the roofs of unoccupied houses. To discover whether the house might be inhabited, we pushed our heads through the skylight and if we saw nobody we began our game. Our parents never allowed us to use the tops of our own houses as the spinning tops would riddle the roof and make it leak in rainy weather.

Another game which we greatly enjoyed was playing with marbles. Persian boys use the bones from the joints of sheep,

goats, and lambs for *ashog* (marbles). Each animal furnished us with two marbles. So whenever slaughtering took place in our village the boys congregated to get the envied bones. The game is played somewhat like the American game of dice, the way the marbles fall determining which one wins. Playing with loaded marbles was entirely legitimate. We bought and sold marbles among ourselves. The usual price for five marbles was one penny. A loaded marble, on account of usually falling on the winning side, was worth two pennies, or ten ordinary bones.

Buffalo, Ram, and Cock Fights and Other Amusements

The Persian buffaloes are entirely unlike the buffaloes that one sees in America. They are far better-looking and are useful domestic animals. We use them for carrying heavy loads, for plowing, and milking. In fact the buffalo milk is much superior to that of a Persian cow.

I had a buffalo that was unusually good-looking and very intelligent. Its forehead, part of its tail, and its ankles were as white as snow. I always had its forehead and tail dyed a dark reddish color with henna. This buffalo was trained. When I wanted to get on its back I used to touch it gently with my *chomakhta* (club) between its horns and the buffalo would bow its head low enough so that I could put my right foot between its big horns. I would then get hold of its back with my hands, and, when I said "Lift," I would be lifted and placed on its back. I used to ride it in the streets and hayfields, and often when it was grazing I went to sleep on its back and fell off. In the heat of the summer I used to bathe it twice a day. I had a very simple method to make it lie down in the water, or any other place. If I gave its tail a little squeeze the buffalo flopped itself in the desired spot and would not get up without being ordered. As it was the female of the species, even with

all my inducements, it did not participate in big fights.

The male buffalo fights are events which one never would want to miss. I used to go miles to see one. The news of a buffalo fight spreads in the towns and villages just like the sound of a fire alarm does in America. The fight usually occurs in the spring when the buffaloes are turned out of the dark stables where they have been kept during the winter. When taken out they are always guarded by their owners with big clubs. Occasionally, however, when two strange buffaloes see each other they will make a charge, and their crash is just like two powerful giants coming together. Ropes and clubs are furnished to separate them. Should the people be unable to pull them apart they sometimes fight a whole morning or afternoon. When one of them begins to get tired or is outmatched it will bellow which is a sure sign that it is preparing to run from its opponent. The

victorious buffalo will pursue it for two or three miles. If caught by its adversary the weaker one will either turn and make another stand or fall flat and bellow for mercy. I have seen buffaloes nearly torn to pieces in such fights. These battles are so ferocious that it frightens people even to dream about them. They say to dream of buffaloes fighting means that angels will come for the soul of some member of the family.

Ram Fights

The ram fights are usually managed by grown people, but occasionally we boys who were lucky enough to own rams enjoyed the sport among ourselves. The Persian rams are large, have a great tail which may weigh from thirty-five to fifty pounds, and fight with their big horns. They are naturally white, red, or brown. If they are white all over, they are painted with red, green, yellow or other colors to make them attractive. The rams are led with chains

by their masters. They are fed on fresh alfalfa, oats, or wheat. The owners take their rams from place to place to make engagements. When the bouts are arranged they are taken to the parks. Upon being set free both rams withdraw for a certain distance and dash forward, hitting each other squarely on the head. The fight is thus kept up until one of them refuses to fight. The victorious ram, unlike the buffalo, rarely follows the defeated one, but returns to his master and gives him a look of pride and satisfaction.

Cock Fighting

This sport in Persia is universally practiced both among men and boys. In our little village I dare say that every male youngster had a game rooster. The fights are usually held in the winter in the stables or on the housetops.

We always raised a good many chickens. Among the flock I would find fighters, and

the one that showed the best prospects I separated from the rest of the tribe and began giving it a course of training. In order to keep it in fighting trim I prepared a dark nest for it in our stable and fed it raw meat, raisins, and nuts. Whenever I took the rooster out for a fight my grandfather allowed me to give it a thimbleful of wine. This was done so that the fowl would not recognize its opponent, as when sober, if defeated, it would not fight the same one again.

The bird that I had for fighting was trained just like a parrot. As soon as it had won a battle it would stand up, flap its wings, give a loud crow, and wait for me to take it home. On the other hand, if defeated, it simply made a quick run to the place where it was kept.

There are a great many other amusements that furnish pleasure to the Persian boys. We did not have skates or sleds,

but often went out sledding on the ice. We also had snowball battles in the streets and on the housetops.

Every year we had a man with a monkey visiting our town. The bear man used to make his trips annually. He came and entertained everybody by wrestling with his own bear and making it dance. Occasionally one of the strong men in our town challenged the visitor. I remember one time the bear, in wrestling with a strong man, almost broke the man's back.

An old man from Kurdistan came every spring with a fake horse. It was the head of a wooden horse tied about his waist and decorated with shawls and jewelry. He went all over the town, in the streets and on the housetops, running after this boy and that boy, shaking his horse's head at us and trying to collect money from our parents.

Rope-dancing used to give us more pleasure than anything else as it brought with it a band and music. The band con-

sisted of only two pieces, a great, big drum and a shepherd's flute. During the performance the band would play some minor Persian tunes and love songs. The rope-dancing company was made up of a father and two of his sons. The father played the drum, the older son the flute, and the younger son danced and walked the rope. After the performance they always took up a collection from the audience, going first to Ketkhoda, the head man of the village. As soon as the leader had received the money he would beat his drum and tell the audience how much the Ketkhoda had contributed. Then he would take the men, one by one, until he had obtained the desired amount, when the circus ended.

The Persian Massalie (*or Stories*)

The Persians are lovers of stories, mirth, and wisdom. They take great delight in repeating quotations from their poets, learned men and jesters. Their proverbs,

phrases, and folklore are looked upon as great treasures and are handed down from father to son. The joy and mirth are beyond measure when the massalie are recited by a gifted story-teller, for he makes expressive motions with his head, hands, and body when emphasizing a good point.

When a son does a foolish act or utters an unwise remark his father, as a punishment, will liken him unto a foolish man by narrating a tale that fits the purpose.

The following stories are frequently quoted by the Persians, and they are listened to with a great deal of enthusiasm. They are told in connection with Mullah Nezralden, a Mohammedan priest, who was at one time greatly beloved by his flock, but, on account of his foolish remarks, he fell from grace and the people began making fun of him. These massalie have been translated by the author from the original and are cited here as an example of what arouses a Persian's laughter.

Before commencing let us, like all true

Persians who recite tales, invoke the blessing of the deity on the reader, listener and the story-teller by first saying, "*Bismillah- el Rahamone el Rahum,*" meaning "In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate":

The Mullah and the Jew

Mullah was a good Mohammedan and never failed to say his prayers. As time went by and his financial condition became serious, he asked Allah to send him one thousand tomans (dollars). A Jew, who was his neighbor, heard his prayers. As a joke he took nine hundred and ninety-nine tomans and dropped them in a bag through the window, saying, "My servant, I have heard your prayers, now take the money which you asked for!" Mullah rejoiced over his fortune. He took the money and, counting it, found one dollar less than he had asked for, and said, "Allah is just, perhaps he has made a mistake in counting the money, and maybe he has

counted the purse for one toman. I am satisfied with what Allah has given me." When the Jew heard these words he became nervous. He immediately came down and knocked on the door. Mullah opened the door and said, "Yahoda, what do you want?" The Jew answered, "That purse and money are mine. I want you to give them to me." Mullah answered, "You are foolish; this is a gift from Allah. What have you got to do with it?" "You blockhead," said the Jew, "this is my money. I dropped it to you from the window." Mullah and the Jew were not able to come to an agreement, so they took their case before a tribunal. Mullah was too old to walk and was entirely too ragged to appear before the judge, so he asked the Jew if he would be kind enough to give him his mule to ride, and also an overcoat; then he would go to the court. The Jew was obliged to satisfy the Mohammedan. Before the judge the Jew protested, "The money is mine." Mullah said, "He is not

telling the truth, and besides, Jews are always blaming the believers and causing them a great deal of trouble. Now I am afraid you will tell the judge that this mule and overcoat are yours." The Jew answered, "Why of course they are mine, even the prophet, Moses, knows I am right about it!" This reply caused the judge to become angry, so he pronounced the truthful Jew to be a falsifier and punished him with the bastinado. So the "believer" fell heir to nine hundred and ninety-nine tomans besides obtaining under false pretenses the mule and the coat of the Jew.

The Mullah and His Lamb

Mullah Nezralden had a young lamb. His friends got together and tried to work a scheme whereby they could kill the lamb. They came to him and said, "Most learned of the learned, suppose to-morrow should be the millennium; come and let us kill the lamb, eat, drink, and enjoy ourselves, for to-morrow we shall die." Mullah con-

sented. After dinner the sun became very hot, so they thought nothing would be more agreeable than to go bathing. They took off all their clothes and went into the water. While they were swimming Mullah set fire to their clothes and burned them. When they were through with their swim they came out to put on their clothes but they could not find them anywhere. They appealed to Mullah and he said, "I burned them." "What a foolish act!" they all cried. "Why, you yourselves," responded Mullah, "said to-morrow would be the millennium. Now, after the millennium, what is the use of having clothes?"

Mullah and the Grace of God

One day Mullah Nezralden was going to the city to buy something. A friend met him on the way and asked, "Mullah, where are you going?" Mullah answered, "To the city to buy something." His friend said, "Why, you fool, don't you say,

'By the grace of God I am going to the city'?" Mullah replied, "Money is in my pocket, brains are in my head, and the stuff is in the market; then why should it be necessary to say 'By the grace of Allah'?" As soon as he got in the city a pickpocket stole his money, so Mullah returned home in great disappointment. His friend met him again and asked him, "What did you buy?" He answered, "A pickpocket stole my money, by the grace of God."

In a Field of Cabbages

Mullah Nezralden went out with a bag in his hand into a field of cabbages. He looked this way and that way, and not seeing anybody began pulling the heads of cabbage and putting them into his bag. Suddenly the owner of the field came and saw him. "Who are you and what are you doing?" asked the owner. Mullah was excited, but finally answered, "I was

passing by and a whirlwind threw me in here." "Well, as you are a priest, there is no doubt that you speak truthfully, but who pulled this cabbage?" Mullah answered, "The whirlwind was so strong, in order not to be lifted up in the air I took hold of the cabbage and it came up by its roots." "Be that as it may," said the owner, "who put it in the bag?" "Wonders will never cease," answered Mullah, "I cannot even understand this myself!"

What Becomes of the Old Moon

In the month[1] of Nourooz, when the people were having the great New Year festival, they began debating the question as to what becomes of the old moon when the new moon appears. Unable to solve the problem they finally took it to Mullah for his interpretation. The Mullah, after giving it serious consideration, said to

[1] The Persian year, being lunar, the New Year falls in the summer as well as it does in the winter.

them: "Ah, you fools, at your age can you not understand this simple problem? The moon is beaten into small bits and made into stars."

V

MARRIAGES AND WEDDING CEREMONIES

MARRIAGES in Persia are frequently arranged by the parents and often they are planned years before the ceremony takes place. When two good friends have the happiness to have one a daughter and the other a son it is considered a sufficient reason for a perfect match. In order to accomplish this purpose, their children must be married as soon as possible, or else upon growing up they may completely ruin the plans of their parents. Hence the early marriages. The boys and girls are usually married between the ages of fifteen and twenty. There are no bachelors and spinsters in Persia, nor even the words in the Persian vocabulary, as it is considered a great sin not to marry. In the years that I spent there I never saw or heard of

any man or woman who had reached the age of maturity that was not enjoying his or her own family life.

Selecting a Sweetheart

The universal idea that the Persian young men and women have no chance whatever in selecting their wives or husbands is exaggerated. The parents naturally make plans for them and recommend that a certain one will make a better mate than the other, and the children, being obedient, usually take their advice; but they are not always compelled to abide by the decisions of their parents. I remember when I was twelve years old my mother had somebody in view for me. As I was the only child, she wanted me to get married as early as possible. But I frankly told her that I did not want a wife, and whenever she mentioned the subject of matrimony before me I would begin to cry, so the subject was dropped because she could not get my consent.

In the case of the marriage of a girl her consent must always be obtained, and if she says, "No," even on the last day, the marriage and agreement, should there be any between the parents, becomes null and void. For this reason the majority of the parents allow their boys and girls to decide their future plans and select their own sweethearts in their own way.

In selecting a sweetheart the following method is sometimes employed. When a young man has reached the age of manhood and finds no suitable girl in his own town, he begins to visit his friends and relatives in far-off towns and cities. While thus visiting he confesses to them his mission. They naturally know a few girls, and he is then told all they know about them, their parents and parents' parents, and whether any of the girls, to their knowledge, have ever been kissed. This would debar any girl in Persia from marrying into a good family.

There is no courting in Persia, in the

American sense of the word. Neither are there any games such as post-office, or standing under the mistletoe. The boys do not take the girls to the theaters, dances, or dinners. When they have any dances the boys dance with boys, and the girls with girls. In short, they are not supposed to meet and get acquainted except when both parties are contemplating marriage, and even then the meeting must be in the presence of the girl's father.

In order to arrange this meeting the boy must, of course, have some excuse, so he immediately becomes an agent for his father or uncles to buy whatever the young lady's father has to sell. If the girl's father has nothing to sell, the youth will call anyway, with the hope of taking a glance at the girl. When the boy calls, usually with one or two of his chums, the girl's father understands his mission immediately. If the boy looks well and comes from a good family he is invited to have tea or sherbet. It being tea-time

the young lady, not realizing a suitor is in the house, steps in in her every-day clothes and with her face uncovered and subject to good observation by the young candidate. If she does not come in the house when the suitor is there she will probably be sent for. If they mention the name of the young candidate and his purpose the chances are that she will stay away from her home, for the Persian girls are extremely bashful.

While having his tea he will, of course, say something about stock and the various things that he is expected to buy. His business, however, being pretty well known he is told that they have nothing to sell him. So he will finally take a last look at the girl and depart for his home and relatives. If the girl has not pleased him he will try some one else, but if she has he makes a favorable report to his father.

The father will then pick some of his best friends who are supposed to be diplomatic, and send them to the girl's father

PERSIAN DANCING.

as *alchies* or special ambassadors, with the purpose of making marriage negotiations. These alchies call on the girl's father, and their mission, of course, being understood, they are invited for afternoon tea, or dinner, or to smoke. One of them will suddenly remark while smoking, "I suppose you want to know why we are here." The father of the girl, according to the custom, plays ignorant, and asks them to tell him their mission. The alchies state their purpose, and, to make the negotiations interesting they are most politely refused by the father. They are expected, of course, to insist, and when they do so they are told, "Well, her mother knows about it." That means another trip must be made by women alchies as the men alchies have no right to talk to his wife.

The boy's mother will then send some of her friends to ask the girl's mother. The same thing will again happen, as the future mother-in-law will refuse her consent until her daughter has been inter-

viewed by one of these women. If the girl really did not like the young candidate, there is nothing that would induce her then to marry him, but if she did, with a little coaxing her consent would be obtained and sooner or later a wedding would follow. On the other hand, if the boy and the girl admired each other, and their parents disagreed for some family reasons, they would elope and get married. Such cases have been known even in Persia, but the girl's family cannot stand this humiliation, so they usually accuse the boy's family of kidnaping their daughter or taking her by force.

When the parties and their parents have agreed to a marriage, the question of dowry must be settled. The dowry is a certain sum of money or land stipulated by the girl's father, which she will receive from her husband in case of a divorce. Besides the dowry, just before the wedding the young lady's mother goes to the bazars and shops selecting fine cloth for her

daughter at the expense of her future father-in-law.

The Wedding

The Persian weddings are long and tiresome, especially to the bride and bridegroom. A day or so before the wedding the emissaries are sent by the parents of the young couple inviting their friends and neighbors to attend this affair. The emissaries carry with them apples and candy, and, while they are presenting the invitations to the favored ones, they also give each an apple, saying, "This is your wedding and not ours; our boy is your boy," or "Our daughter is your daughter."

After the invitations are sent, preparation is made for the feasting. Several oxen are slaughtered to feed the guests and the poor of the village. For three or more days the boy's father furnishes two meals to everybody that comes into his house. He will sometimes even take strangers and passers-by into his home to

eat and drink in celebration of the greatest event of the young groom's life.

The first day is a preparation to receive guests and to exchange greetings. The young groom on this occasion is referred to as "King." He is kissed by his relatives and friends. In the home of the bride the wedding is looked upon in a different attitude. Her parents are downhearted. Her mother cries continually because she is losing her daughter. Friends call and sympathize with her, assuring her that it is a blessing and that her daughter is doing her womanly duty.

On the groom's housetop two musicians with drums and a flute play merrily every day. As soon as the drum is heard the dancers begin to come. Then suddenly the most expert one in the crowd pulls out his many-colored handkerchief and begins to lead. They dance in a circle, going from right to left. Men dancers are usually rather rough. They look right and left, thumping their feet on the housetop, and

the leader swings his handkerchief to and fro. To these dances everybody is admitted. The best one, of course, takes the lead, then comes the next best, and so on. I used to dance, but being young and inexperienced I was always placed at the tail end.

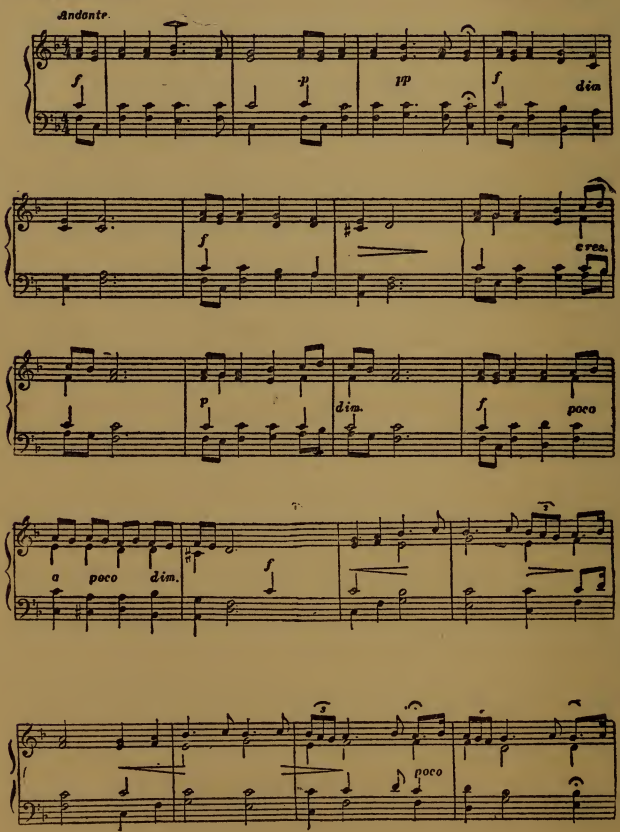
The wedding meal hours are announced from the housetop by the musicians. They have a certain tune for this part of the performance, just as the Army and Navy have a special bugle call by which the soldiers and sailors are summoned to their "chow." After the dinner, dancing and playing begin again. This time it is held in the house and sometimes continued until after midnight. At the night dance I never took part, as I was tired from dancing in the daytime. I usually slept on my mother's lap, or on the lap of some one who was not dancing.

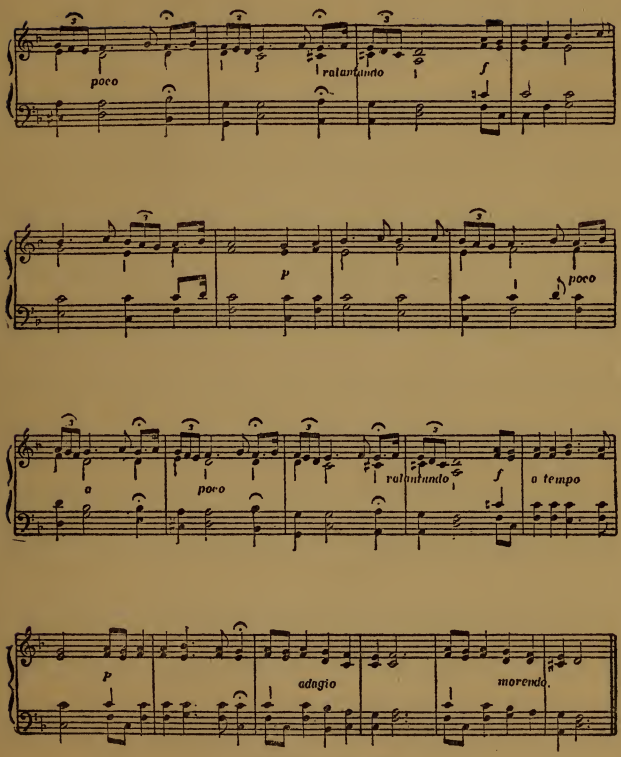
Sometimes to make the entertainment more pleasant they have some special singers and players. There is no written

PERSIAN DREAM

REVERIE.

Arr. by Chas. Kunas. YOUEL B. MIRZA.





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music in Persia, consequently all the musicians must memorize their songs and notes. The musical instruments are Kamenja (violin), Saz (mandolin), and Torr (guitar). Their music is very melancholy, and as you see from the illustration, practically all is in minor keys.

In our province there was a famous blind singer by the name of Ashag Mamet. He was employed at practically all important weddings, going from place to place on a donkey. In some ways he was the most remarkable man that I have ever seen. This Ashag (singer) could sing for three consecutive days without repeating a single song. As he sang he played his own instrument, Torr (guitar). His most famous song was "The Groom and His Beautiful Apple." In this he compared the bride to a red apple on top of a tall apple-tree, and the groom to a boy who desired to eat the apple but was unable to reach it. He would sing this with such

Mirza Haroot Maroot.
Who played Persian and Turkish tunes on

Kurdish Chieftain of Soudjboulak.

feeling that sometimes tears would roll down his cheeks.

The last day of the wedding is perhaps the most interesting of all, as the bride is brought to her father-in-law's home. If the bride does not live in the same town, some handsome young men are picked by the groom or his father and sent after her with a band of musicians. These men are armed to the teeth with guns, revolvers, and sabers. Upon reaching the bride's village, their band begins to play and they fire some blank cartridges. If the distance is very great they usually remain over night as the guests of the town. Otherwise they take the bride back immediately on a horse or a Takhtoravan. About a mile from home they begin their music and firing again to let the townsfolk know that the bride is on her way. When the groom hears the distant drum he mounts a horse and dashes down the street to meet his bride. When within a

few feet of her he gently throws her an apple and dashes back to his home, followed by the young men of the bride's party. They dash after him, and, if he is caught, they paddle him well. It is very seldom, however, that he is caught, as it is considered a great disgrace for a groom not to be able to run his horse faster than his opponents.

When the bride has finally reached her father-in-law's home she will be taken and entertained by a friend of the groom's mother. It is considered a great honor to entertain the bride. The lady who is so lucky as to receive this honor is supposed to protect and guard her fair guest very carefully. During the evening the groom and his best men make strenuous efforts to see the bride, but they cannot, for she is too well guarded, so they wait until the next morning.

After the bride has spent the night with her mother-in-law's friend she is then taken to the church, or sometimes to a

friend's home, where the marriage ceremony is read. Then she is led, with the band of musicians, to her future home. Upon entering the gate, in order to have a fruitful future she is compelled to walk over a sheaf of wheat or vines. When she goes into her home and is comfortably seated, her presents are displayed. It is on this occasion that her artistic ability plays an important part. Everything that she has made, embroidered or woven in her girlhood is thrown on her trunk or on a piece of rope for people to look at. The onlookers, first saying, "Mashallah," congratulate her heartily, and the wedding festivities finally come to an end.

VI

PERSIAN FASTS AND FESTIVALS

The Persians have a great number of festivals and do a great deal of fasting also. The most important celebrations are held on the anniversaries of the birth and death of their saints and prophets. The Christians celebrate Christmas and Easter, and the Mohammedans observe principally Shaban and the great festival of Ramazan. The latter, as well as a part of the first is held in honor of Ali, the fourth Caliph.

Christmas and Easter

The Christians observe a Christmas fast by refraining from eating meat for twenty-five days. Easter is observed in the same way with the exception of a longer period of fasting, similar to the observance of Lent.

My own family, though they enjoyed all the festivities, never fasted. Occasionally I would run out in the street on fasting days with a beef sandwich. The boys who were compelled by their parents to fast took a great dislike to me. Upon seeing me enjoying my meat sandwich they would hiss and call me ugly names. Some would say, "God will kill you and send you to Gehenna (Hades) before the fasting days are over."

At the end of each fast, cattle and sheep are slaughtered so that every one can have plenty of good meat to eat and to enjoy at the festivals.

Christmas in the Province of Azerbajin falls in a cold and snowy season. Therefore it is celebrated on the housetops. On such occasions the boys of our village gathered in bunches to play marbles and Christmas eggs. One egg was hit on the end by another just as the boys pick eggs at Easter in this country. The one that broke had to be given to the boy that had

the hardest egg. Once we discovered an egg that no one could break. This we found to be a china egg. Some smart boy who had made a trip to the city was the owner of the envied property. The presence of such an egg in our little village created a panic among the boys. We could never discover who had it because, when the owner had won about a hundred eggs he sold it to some one else with the idea, of course, of not giving himself away. Personally, I never was so fortunate as to possess it.

To guard against the china one we tested each other's eggs by tapping them against our teeth. By this method we sometimes discovered a china egg and also came to some conclusion as to which egg would break first.

There is no Santa Claus in Persia, and I do not believe the devout people would allow any one to introduce this good fairy into their Christmas festivities.

Easter comes in the spring when the land

is a vast carpet of wild flowers. The festival is celebrated in the home, the orchards, and the hayfields. Joy and happiness reign supreme for a whole week. The people dress up in their best attire and pay visits. They greet each other by saying, "May your Easter be a blessing." Each day is given over to a different program. The first day of the festival is a visiting day, the second day is for running and ball-playing. The third and fourth days they match colored eggs and play games. The final day the fun reaches its climax, as all these various pleasures are enjoyed together. They play, run, dance, and the boys have wrestling matches. The young people enjoy themselves to such an extent that, for a week after they are heartbroken because the festival is over.

Shaban and Ramazan

The most interesting, amusing, and yet most painful of all festivals in Persia are those of Shaban and Ramazan. I say pain-

ful, because, as we shall see, great agony and suffering is caused when fasting and celebrating the latter of these two festivals.

Shaban comes on the fifteenth day of the eighth month of Shaban, and it is to the Persians as the Fourth of July is to Americans. It is celebrated in honor of Imam Mehdah, the last descendant of Caliph Ali and of Ali's marriage anniversary to Fatima, the famous daughter of the Prophet Mohammed. Fatima, besides being beautiful, was a descendant of one of the noblest tribes of Arabia, called Karoush. On account of her noble birth she had many suitors. Her father wanted her to marry Ali, a blood relative, but, not wanting to create any friction and ill feeling among her admirers, it is said that he decreed "no one, except he on whose house a shooting-star will fall, can have Fatima." Ali, being the favorite of the Prophet, naturally was lucky enough to have his house hit by the star.

On the evening of the Shaban festival

practically the whole population of Persia can be seen in the streets and on the house-tops watching the fireworks. No one is too poor to buy skyrockets on this occasion. Some people actually go without food to save money to take part in this event, and any one who is not participating in the evening's performances is considered to be a poor Mussulman and unbeloved of Allah. This festival, with the exception of those celebrated by the Christians, is the sanest of all Persian festivals.

Two weeks after Shaban the great fast of Ramazan begins. It falls on the ninth month of the Persian year, which is lunar. Thus it runs through the different seasons and falls in winter, as well as in summer, and on a different date each year.

It is observed in commemoration of the death of Ali and his two sons, Hassan and Hosein. The Persian boys who bear these names are particularly proud of them during this fast. The fasting begins with the sight of the new moon. I have seen people

climbing tall trees and on the housetops looking for it. The first person who sees it considers himself quite fortunate. When it is cloudy the Government informs the population by firing a cannon or by special messenger, that the moon has risen. As soon as the appearance of the new moon is established, the people all over the country become at once more religious than they were before. The poor, the Jews, and the Christians, if they show a sober face during the fast are treated better than usual.

To observe the fast, no one except infants, sick people, and the sons of the road, i. e., travelers, are supposed to eat, drink, swear, smoke, or enjoy any social pleasures from sunrise to sunset. In the cities those who fast are summoned by the firing of a cannon to fast and later to feast. As soon as the Muezzin call, or the firing of the cannon is heard by the people in the evening the daily meal begins. They rush from housetops and the streets or wherever they

happen to be, and they continue eating until the next morning, when they are again informed by a Muezzin call or gun-fire to stop eating. There are more deaths from over-eating during this month of fasting than from all other causes put together.

When this fast falls in the summer season when the days are long and hot, it becomes unbearable. But, "What of it?" they say, "even if one should die from heat and thirst while fasting, what is that compared to everlasting life, or to the final reward with which one could obtain the password to heaven?"

The Mohammedans continue this fast until the new moon is seen again. The last ten days of the fast of Ramazan are full of excitement. In the evenings I used to see companies of men, women, and boys in the streets of our village carrying banners, clubs, emblems and metallic bands. They cried, beating their heads and breasts with their fists, pulling their hair, and, like lunatics, shouted aloud the

names of Ali, Hassan and Hosein, their martyred prophets.

On the last three days of the fast all the shops and bazars are closed. The mosques all over Persia are draped with black, prayers are conducted and everybody is gloomy, as the saints are about to be executed by their enemies.

The most agonizing of all fast days is the last day of Ramazan. It may be properly termed the Mohammedan slashing day. In the morning all the Mohammedans, young and old, form processions. They march through the streets and graveyards, shouting as usual the names of Ali, Hassan, and Hosein, in such a manner that the names can be heard at a great distance. At first the name of Ali is shouted three times, then they continue with all the famous names and repeat them successively, saying, "Hassan, Hosein ya Ali," until they are hoarse from shouting and can hardly whisper.

In the morning each young man reports

to the village priest or to a barber who inflicts with a razor a wound in his forehead. The blood then streams on the white apron which he wears for the occasion to show the public how much blood he has shed. Then the young men go into the streets with swords and sabers in their hands and form a line. Suddenly the leader will shout, "Ya, Ali!" Immediately each follower begins inflicting deeper wounds on his scalp. In order to keep them from slashing themselves, friends and relatives hold sticks on the foreheads of the frenzied young men.

The procession continues all day long. They go into the hills and into the graveyards, and visit different villages, shouting the names of Ali and his comrades. Each village has its band. If the band of one village can show more blood than the others it is considered that the more pious men are in that village.

As a boy, whenever I saw these bloody bands shouting, carrying their banners,

and coming toward me, I ran and hid. I was dreadfully afraid of them. When I got a little older I used to watch and pity them. On one such occasion I remember seeing a man fall on the ground from loss of blood. Not infrequently some bigoted Mohammedan would torture himself to death on this day, as it was considered a great blessing for a member of a family to die from wounds inflicted on the last day of Ramazan.

In the cities the bands march from mosque to mosque and to the mayor's office, demanding the release of prisoners that have been unjustly condemned. In order to quiet them the mayor always releases one or two prisoners, not taking into consideration their guilt. The festival finally ends with big religious meetings in the parks and large donations to the priests.

VII

PERSIAN HOUSES. THE MODE OF LIVING, EATING, AND DRESSING

The Persians are divided into various classes and castes. The wealthy people have elegant houses, containing different apartments for women and for servants. Their homes are built of stone and marble, and decorated with various pleasing colors.

The masses, however, have but one big room from thirty-five to fifty feet square. The ceiling is supported by two or four stout pillars with several beams running from one wall to the other. It is covered with timber, reeds, and weeds. All this is then covered with mud. The roof is plastered with the best kind of clay, mixed with straw to keep it from cracking and to keep the rain from soaking through. In slushy

weather the water is conducted by means of a spout into the yard or into big tanks, to be used for washing.

There are no chimneys in the Persian houses. When the fire is kindled, smoke naturally fills the room, but finally, when the fire begins to burn well, this escapes through the skylights. From the effects of smoke, the ceilings in the Persian homes are quite dark. There are no windows, but by means of numerous skylights the Persian houses are well lighted and thoroughly ventilated. There is only one door. Khayyam says, "I came out of the same door where in I went." So must every one who enters a house in Iran do.

In the one room, besides human beings, I have seen cats, dogs, chickens, horses, buffaloes, cows, heifers, goats, swallows, and sparrows. This is a home for everything and everybody. A large part of the floor is used by the family and the incoming guests for their shoes. Upon entering the house one must always remove these

and walk with bare or stockinged feet on the rugs. The room is divided into various sections, one section being used for sitting and sleeping. In another section is a wooden box full of flour. The top of this box is used for the bedclothes. At night they are taken down, and in the morning hung on the frame again.

In many of the Christian homes there is a tiny room which is used only for prayers. The head of the house, upon rising in the morning, washes his face, combs his hair and beard, and enters into this little sanctuary for meditation.

In addition to this, some well-to-do families also have a special apartment for receiving guests. This is richly furnished with Persian rugs and tapestry, and is heated with a stove. Upon entering this room, the guests leave their shoes in a vestibule. In sitting down, like true Orientals, they sit with their feet under them. Every now and then one may see a chair in one of these apartments for the

use of European visitors. Persians themselves prefer sitting on rugs or lying on cushions to using uncomfortable chairs. I confess that there was nothing so tiresome to me as sitting on a chair. In a few minutes I would drop from it to a cushion with a breath of satisfaction. The most important spot in the Persian home is the oven. It is built in the center of the room, the top of it being on a level with the floor. The oven is made of clay, in cylindrical form, from three and a half to four feet deep, and about two and a half feet in diameter. Wood being scarce, the principal fuel used is dried manure. The poor people go in the pasture during the summer and gather wood and manure to be used for heating and cooking.

The Kurse

In the cold winter days the people place a *kurse* (square table) over the oven and cover this with heavy blankets which hang down to the floor, keeping the heat within.

Then they put their feet under the edges of the blankets, or even into the oven to keep them warm. Also, when the nights are cold they sleep here with a great deal of comfort. The head man of the house takes the most desirable and comfortable place. This is the spot farthest from the door and the draught.

The top of the kurse is used for various purposes. The boys play marbles on it while the girls knit. The head of the family enjoys his water-pipe, which is smoked in turn by the whole family except the children.

The Housetops

The housetops being flat and the houses built close together, one can walk from one end to the other end of the village just as though on the ground. The housetops are very popular with the boys.

They sing and dance on them. In the summer, aided by the bright Oriental moonlight, all the villagers eat supper, pay

their friendly calls, and sleep there on account of the great heat.

The boys frequently do a little eavesdropping from the housetops. Stealing softly upon the roof, they go close to the skylight and listen to the conversation of the family beneath.

Cooking and Eating

The Persians give more time to cooking and eating than to anything else. The need of servants is far greater in Persia than in many countries, as they refuse to do more than one thing. For instance a cook will do only cooking and nothing else. A servant that waits on the table will refuse to answer the call at the door or do any dish-washing. A *jelouder* (groom) will not attend to his master's horses and stables. Happily, however, the servants' wages are not high. Most of the servants we had came from Kurdestan. For two suits of clothes, a place to sleep, and about two dollars a month for board they were

PERSIAN WOMEN MAKING CANDY AND SMOKING THEIR WATER-PIPES.

perfectly satisfied to remain indefinitely in our family.

Bread-Baking

In Persia the bread is made differently from what it is in this country. First the dough is mixed and made into small balls. Each ball is put on a flat board and rolled until it is about two feet long, about a foot wide, and almost as thin as paper. It is then lifted with a utensil made for the purpose and slapped against the side of the oven, which is quite hot. Within a few minutes the dough is baked. The baking is done according to the size of the family. In summer on account of the great heat, baking is done only occasionally. Some families on a cool day bake enough bread to last them several weeks. To keep the loaves from getting moldy the bread is dried and stored away. Before the meal-time they take out a few loaves and sprinkle them with water to make them soft.

The cooking is done either in the house or in a place specially prepared for such purposes. Persian kitchens are often several yards from the main living-room. The food is brought in on trays. High government officials, for fear of being poisoned, frequently compel their servants to bring the trays, breaking the seal in front of them, and taste a portion of the food before it is given to the master.

Not being afraid of being poisoned, I used to enjoy my meals wherever I went, and like all boys, I thought more of eating than I did of studying. In the early morning I would have bread and some fine buffalo butter or cream with honey or syrup. As soon as I finished I would run to my grandmother Monna, where I would eat bread or cheese and drink some hot milk or tea. If not going to school, I always made a trip to our near-by vineyard or orchard to eat grapes or fruit that I found ripe. After playing, or picking *toita* (berries) for a few hours I returned

home to lunch. This noon meal usually consisted of meat, potatoes,[1] rice, and plenty of sherbet, a Persian sweet drink. Later I would stroll in the orchard, getting peaches, plums, cherries, apricots, grapes, or anything that appeared good to eat. About four o'clock, we, or some of my relatives, always had tea. Sometimes it was served in the orchard in the shade of a big plum-tree, or in a tall tower which we had in our vineyard. I usually went wherever I found it convenient, never taking into consideration whether I was wanted or not. At these afternoon teas I frequently drank five or six cups. We drank tea all the year round, and in the winter usually ate raisins and nuts with it.

On account of the late setting of the sun, dinner was served very late in the evening. Ordinarily we had meat, potatoes, rice, cabbage, and sometimes kidney beans. We rarely had coffee, and many never used any butter with their meals.

[1] In Persia they raise no sweet potatoes.

There were no pies, ice-cream, cake or any other dessert to be eaten after the meal. The place of these good things was taken by the water-pipe, in the smoking of which I was not permitted to participate. After dining, I usually fell asleep and had to be awakened and sent to bed. The Persians use no knives and forks. For this reason when they have soups, they put bread in it to make it thick like hash, then by dipping a portion of thin bread, held by the thumb and first two fingers of the right hand, they lift small quantities and eat it without soiling their fingers.

In a Persian family meal there are very few dishes used. One dish sometimes answers the purpose. When the food is thus served, each one eats from his own side of the dish, and it would be a sign of ill-breeding to try to eat from some one else's share.

Sometimes the following superstition is not neglected after a meal by one of the young members of the family. They say

that if you lick the dish your sweetheart will be beautiful. As soon as I heard and understood the meaning of this, I began putting it into practice. But very quickly I was discouraged by my mother, who gave me one of her usual sane lectures on the subject of "misleading ideas."

The Mode of Dressing

The fashions in Persia do not change as they do in Europe, or in the countries of the western hemisphere. The girls and boys of to-day, as well as all the men and women, wear the same style of dress as was worn by their grandparents.

On the street or in the mosque there is no way of distinguishing the wife or daughter of a banker or prince from that of a shoemaker. When they go out, the women wear thick veils of almost any color and material. This hides the whole form and face, but the two black, almond-shaped eyes. It is a picturesque sight to see these tall figures promenading the

street, seeing everything, and showing nothing but their sparkling Persian eyes, which seem to enjoy the curiosity they excite.

The following is supposed to be the origin of the custom of wearing a veil. The Prophet Mohammed, while traveling with his beautiful young wife in Arabia, came to a large, shady, fig-tree, with its branches and green leaves hanging over a waterfall. The air being cool and restful there, he and his wife sat down to refresh themselves. Suddenly there came two priests, who, seeing such a beautiful woman, turned to look at her. As she was extremely handsome, the wicked priests continued their rudeness by turning from time to time and gazing as they went along at the moon-faced beauty sitting beside Mohammed.

This affair grieved and irritated the Prophet beyond his apostolic endurance. In order to protect womankind from the

eyes of men, and to improve the moral conditions existing at that time, he advised that all female believers, when out of doors or worshiping in mosques, should cover themselves with veils.

As soon as the women enter their homes, they remove their veils, and show their beautiful and costly clothes.

They wear trousers of beautiful velvet, which cover the lower part of the body down to the heels. The blouse is a garment made of silk and fastened in front by means of a number of loops and small buttons of silk, gold or silver. Around the waist is an embroidered girdle of silk, decorated in front with a plate of gold or silver and precious stones. They wear leather slippers, with soles of ivory or some hard wood. Frequently the women paint their toe-nails and the bottoms of their feet with henna, and, as they seldom wear stockings, this is quite noticeable as they walk.

The winter costume is similar to that of the summer with the addition of a short upper garment and silk shawls.

The women wear no hats. They have beautiful long black hair, which they arrange in tresses adorned with pearls and clusters of precious stones, or ornaments of gold and silver. While out of doors they cover the head with silk shawls, bandeaux, diadems, and caps usually made by themselves. These are very costly, and vary in form and taste according to the wealth and circumstances of the wearer.

How the Men Dress

The costumes for men consist of a pair of wide trousers, a shirt, a *kemir,* or girdle, *erkhalig* or vest, *kurde* or jacket, and *gaima, caba,* and *abioo* are different shapes of overcoats. The hat is called by the natives, *bork* or *koloi.* They wear several different varieties of shoes. The long trousers, which almost reach to the ankles, are made of cloth, silk or cotton, they have

no pockets, and are tied with a cord at the waist.

The shirt worn by the Persians is short, and without a collar. It comes over the trousers just below the hips, and is fastened by means of two buttons on the left shoulder.

The erkhalig, or vest, fits tightly over the shirt. The choice of color and material is according to the fancy of the wearer. I have worn, red, white, black-and-white, brown, and yellow erkhaligs. This garment has two pockets on each side, and a small watch-pocket. The caba is a long robe reaching to the ankles, and fitting closely about the hips.

The gaima, which is worn by the wealthy people, looks somewhat like a clergyman's coat in this country. It is the most stylish of all men's wearing apparel. The Persian overcoat is called abioo. It is made of heavy cloth or wool for winter. It folds over the breast and buttons on the side. This garment is worn over the caba, and

on account of its clumsiness is very rarely used by the young men.

A kurde is a short jacket made by the Kurds of wool, attractively ornamented with threads of gold and silver. Practically every boy of my acquaintance wore one of these jackets, which is stiff like a board and fits tightly to the body.

The hats are made of short, curly black lamb's wool. They are about four inches high and are stiff. The boys frequently wear a tall Turkish fez, with a long silk tassel. Turbans of all colors except white and green are worn by the Persian men. To the Mohammedans the white signifies purity, and the green immortality. On account of the religious importance attached to these colors, they are exclusively used by various religious heads, the clergy, and by the theological students. In fact, it is not safe for any one to be seen with such turbans, who is not a member of one of the above classes.

The most prominent and important

article of apparel is the kemir or girdle, which is twisted in a peculiar fashion over the coba or the erkhalig. Some of the girdles are several yards long, and the young man that has the longest kemir is looked upon by everybody as a dude. The girdle is used by them to show their figures, and also to hold the *khanjar* or dagger. This is about a foot and a half long, with a sharp point at the end. The guard is securely fastened with a cord to the girdle on the left side.

The khanjars are worn as an ornament, and some of them are highly polished and enriched with ivory and with precious stones.

For shoes the Persians have three kinds of slippers. The poor wear sandals. A very good grade of slippers comes from Mecca. They are white, made of cloth, and are soft and comfortable to wear. Being quite expensive, they are worn only by the rich and the Hadji, who usually brings a few pairs with him when coming back

from his pilgrimage. The socks used are worsted or cotton. In the summer very few boys wear either shoes or socks, as they prefer going barefooted. The footwear comes in all colors. I have worn shoes of black, green, red, and yellow leather in Persia, but when I saw the American shoes I lost my taste for my own country slippers and was never satisfied until I had a pair of American boots.

VIII

PERSIAN VILLAGES AND CITIES. TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS OF THE INHABITANTS

The Villages

From a distance a Persian village looks like a single house. With the exception of high, imposing mosque minarets and tall poplar-trees usually surrounding the villages, a traveler can see nothing but a low, flat roof. The villages are very primitive. There are no street lights, they have neither gas nor electricity. If one enters a village at night he must feel his way with a staff to keep from falling into pits and little pools. There are no pavements. The streets are very muddy in winter and extremely dusty in summer. Not having any sidewalks, human beings must not only walk on the same ground with the domestic

animals, but they must give way to the herds of cattle.

The Persian villages are divided into wards, each of which has a name, but there are no names given to streets, and the houses are not numbered. To call on a stranger, one must first find out the ward in which he lives, then, in order to find his home, every house in the ward must be canvassed.

There are no mail deliveries in Persia except in the large cities. The village mail is usually sent to the nearest city by a special messenger, who brings back any mail for the village and distributes it among the inhabitants. Many being uneducated, the community employs a Mirza to read and to write their letters. The writing of Persian letters, besides taking much time, requires one thoroughly versed in etiquette, ceremonies, and with more than the usual education. This gives employment to a large number of scribes that are usually known as Mirza. The village

A Village Near Shiraz.

Mirza is from an excellent family and is known for his integrity and honesty and force of character. The community for which he renders this service has an implicit faith in him. He is liberally paid and is well informed as to the affairs of the village.

The Chronometers, or the Methods Employed for Measuring Time

There are no time-pieces in Persian villages. They tell time by the position of the sun and by their shadows. When the weather is cloudy, time is reckoned according to the way they feel. The village has no curfew bell, nor any specified time for boys to retire. Men, women, and children turn in for their night's rest when they are tired and sleepy or when they run out of conversation and town gossip.

Practically every family in the village has a rooster to wake them up in the morning. The first crowing is supposed to be at midnight; a second crowing at three

o'clock, and the third one about five. From that time on the rooster will continue crowing until it is nearly daylight. The family considers that then every one should be up and doing his daily work.

Farming and Cultivation of the Ground

All land in Persia, strictly speaking, belongs to the Crown. It is leased to the favorites and friends of the Shah for ninety-nine years or for an indefinite period, and it descends to the posterity of the lessee. However, when the land is purchased the owners have an absolute claim on it and it can not be taken legally from their descendants.

The individuals who thus become holders of large tracts of land divide it into small shares and let farmers cultivate it on terms agreeable to both parties. The usual terms are that the landlord should receive one-half of the crops, and the other half be kept by his tenant for his labor and to defray expenses, such as buying plows,

oxen, buffaloes, and paying the sowers and reapers. The land is plowed by buffaloes and oxen. The implement for plowing is made of wood with a sharp steel point. They have two sizes of plows: the small plow is managed by one man and two buffaloes, the larger plow by five men or four pairs of buffaloes. One of the men holds the big plow in the ground by means of the handle, and each of the others rides on the yoke of two buffaloes. These laborers are extremely fond of singing, and while plowing can be heard for some distance chanting their buffalo songs.

The Persian agrarians use no "gee" or "haw." When they want their buffaloes to go to the right they whip them on that side with a flexible switch, and on the left side to make them go to the left.

It is impossible to raise any crops without the land being freely and frequently irrigated. The Persian summers are extremely hot. From the effects of the heat I

have seen the ground cracked and the boys' feet blistered from stepping on stones and hot sand. The rains fall usually in the spring and the latter part of autumn. On such occasions I have heard thunder and hail and seen great storms which reminded me of the time of Noah. The appearance of a rainbow in the sky was very welcome at these times.

On account of requiring dry weather for gathering the crops, it is indeed fortunate that the rains do not fall in the summer as they do in many other countries. All harvesting, reaping, and binding is done by the weary hands of the peasants. They cut the wheat with the sickle, bind it by hand, and flail it in the open fields to separate the chaff from the wheat. This method of harvesting is so primitive that it takes months from the time they reap the wheat to the time it is stored away, and should there be heavy rains during this season the crops sprout and become unfit for use.

The Persian Products

The products raised in Persia are very numerous. Dates, figs, pomegranates, peaches, apples, pears, plums, cherries, berries, apricots, grapes, and all kinds of nuts grow in abundance.The farmers also raise watermelons, muskmelons, cucumbers, wheat, barley, millet, and tobacco. For hay they have plenty of clover and alfalfa.

In the grocery stores one can buy honey, molasses, cheese, butter, oil, clabber, peas, rice, and fruits, but no canned goods.

The Village Trades

Each village has its own storekeeper, blacksmith, miller, carpenter, bricklayer, barber, and a dyer, of whom we will speak in the chapter on Persian rugs. These are hereditary trades. The father trains the son to carry on the work planned for him by his parents and his parents' parents. The storekeeper is one of the busiest men

in the village. His stock comprises groceries, candy, drugs, gum, clothing, and in fact everything except meat, which must always be obtained fresh. Not having any ice establishments the meat is bought at the *Gasapkhana* where they slaughter the cattle. The village merchant opens his establishment at his own pleasure and closes it whenever he feels like it. Very frequently he is alone in his shop. If he is called to prayer by the Muezzin from the tower of the village mosque, he stops his business and, facing toward Mecca, offers his prayers. A good Mohammedan will never allow his customers to interrupt his devotions. On the other hand, if the storekeeper is a hypocrite, he stops his prayer, waits on the customer, and then goes on with his supplication. There are good and bad Mohammedans just as there are such of other religions. An educated Mohammedan is a very honest man and he will never take advantage of a friend or of a customer, but a Mohammedan who is

bigoted and miserly thinks that his prayers wash away all his sins and he invariably takes advantage of his customers. I have seen big disputes and even fist fights just after a prayer in these stores, because the customer thought he had been cheated in the measurement or weight of an article. A dishonest shopkeeper has no respect for anybody, not even his own relatives. They urge passers-by and onlookers to come in and buy. Not infrequently I have seen a merchant step up and, grasping a prospective purchaser by his garments, talk him into buying. When, however, his efforts failed he would spit on the customer.

The village blacksmith enjoys a far better reputation than the merchant, for he earns his living by hard labor. He rises early in the morning, makes his fire in a big open fireplace, and goes to work at his anvil. He has very few implements, a blowpipe, a big hammer, and a pair of tongs to hold the hot iron. The blacksmith makes the village plows, picks, and

shovels, and repairs everything of this character.

The village miller is viewed in the same light as the village merchant; he is very much mistrusted. The families go to the mill in turn to have their wheat ground. For fear of having it stolen they remain all the time in the mill until the flour is finished and packed to be taken home. The miller receives from his customers a certain measure of grain for each bushel of wheat he grinds. The mill is run by water and usually is located near the source of a stream or a waterfall. The inhabitants who live in the mountains and in desert places where there is no such accommodation, generally use a hand-mill.

The carpenter and the village barber are the contractors. The carpenter makes an agreement with the inhabitants to make and to repair every plow, wagon, door and key in the homes. This trade is looked upon with a great deal of respect,

and to become an expert carpenter in Persia is indeed an art.

The trade of bricklaying is also considered to be a favorable occupation to follow.

To learn the trades of carpenter and bricklayer an apprentice must serve his master for at least three years and he must pay in the first year from $25 to $50 to his instructor. The pupil does not work at his trade for more than two or three hours a day. His work is chiefly in his master's garden, trimming hedges, spading the ground, and planting seed. He works there like a servant and attends faithfully to his master's pipe and hasheesh. It is the same with tailors, perfumers, druggists, and even bankers in the cities.

The barbers in Persia are considered by the boys as a necessary evil. This feeling is especially keen when one is being trimmed and shaved. The men and boys have their heads shaved except for a tuft

of hair on the top and behind each ear. The older men wear beards and the young men all have moustaches; in fact if a man appears without a moustache he is called a woman.

The village barber makes a contract with people to go once a week to shave them. He wears a skin belt or girdle in which he carries razors, strops, knives, scissors, a comb, and a small tin cup. The barber shaves his customers wherever he finds them. I have seen a dozen or more men on a sunny winter day standing beside a wall whittling and waiting patiently to be shaved. In the summer the barber's job is a very difficult one as he has to hunt for his customers all over the village and the surrounding country. To soften the hair for shaving the village barber does not use soap but simply water. I used to dread his coming as much as I did the coming of a thunder-storm. He would pour a little cold water (in winter he used warm water) over my head and rub it with both hands

just as hard as he could until the scalp would get red and numb. When the hair was soft he would take a razor or a sharp knife and commence. To keep me quiet, in the course of the operation he used to frequently give me lumps of sugar and talk of my bravery. But, even with all his kindness and complimentary remarks I avoided him and his razor whenever I could.

There are no banks in a Persian village. Each man is his own banker. He hides his money in a safe place until he has accumulated one or two hundred dollars, which is then invested in land. The villagers are extremely frugal, nearly every man owns a little vineyard or orchard, and I shall be safe in saying that 99 per cent own their homes.

The Social Life

The Persian language is very musical and very rich in idioms, and in vowel sounds. Persians believe that their lan-

guage excels every other language in the world. Mohammed himself was so charmed with it that once he is supposed to have said he would ask that their language might be the language of Paradise. Be that as it may, it is quite certain that as the Persians are called "the French of the East," so is their language considered by English and American philologists to merit the same comparison.

With such a delightful language as a base the Persians can make themselves very entertaining to their guests. As a whole, they are very social and polite, and unusually friendly to strangers. To make their friends and callers feel at home they say to them, "You have come on my eye," or, "The eye of my home is yours. Your servants, Ali and Mustafah, my dear sons, are dust under your feet, etc., etc." They express themselves in a dozen different ways to please their visitors.

When a man visits a good friend it is really hard for them to part. Every time

the guest makes an effort to go home his friend will urge him to stay another day. They never let a guest leave without accompanying him part of the way home. At the parting point the friends kiss each other, and the guest will implore his host to go all the way and visit him for a while.

A Persian, before accepting an invitation, must be asked several times. When they invite a friend to dinner they beg him by saying, "*Man uloom* (I die), *garbanen uloom* (I will be your sacrifice), *Inshallah* (in the name of Allah) you will favor me with your presence." If the friend still refuses they grasp him by the collar and take him to the dinner. The reason why a Persian will insist on his friend favoring him with his presence at dinner or any other function is because Persians, as a class, abhor being termed parasites or spongers.

The men never speak of their domestic affairs. No matter how much trouble a man has in his home, an outsider will never

know of it. At gatherings the subjects they best like to discuss are politics, religion, poetry, and the Persian heroes, such as Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes, and numerous others. The Persians are very proud of their country, history, and literature.

As true believers they scoff at all religions but their own. Occasionally, however, one finds a broad-minded Mohammedan who does not believe that Mohammed and the rest of the Imams were the prophets of Allah. Such a person, to save himself endless trouble, politely refrains from participating in religious discussions.

In the conversations that I used to hear in front of the mosques the subject of jahad, or a Holy War, was not neglected. At times a bigoted Mohammedan would refer to the Christians as *kopak* (dogs) and another would sigh for a Holy War to exterminate the *kopak giviours* which means "unclean dogs." Indeed very few of these Mohammedans look upon a Christian as a desirable being, and the Chris-

tians, on the other hand, have the same feeling toward the Mohammedans. In fact, to Christians, whether in Persia, Turkey, India, Syria or Armenia, a Mohammedan government, and the prophet himself, are the greaest curse God ever placed on mankind, and, from their past sufferings and massacres, they have a right to such a view.

In a Persian City

When I was eight years old my father took me, for the first time, to Urumiah, a city of about thirty-five to forty thousand inhabitants. The most amusing incident of this trip was my getting lost among the camels. Even though I had lived close to a caravan route I had never seen a camel up to this time. I was particularly anxious to see a real camel, as I had heard a very interesting story as to "who made the camel." I was told that once upon a time Moses asked God to allow him to create something that would be of great help

to him. When Moses obtained the desired permission he created the camel to carry his load while he was traveling in the wilderness. Moses, however, in creating this animal forgot to provide food for it. As soon as the camel got hungry it ran after Moses to eat him. When Moses saw that he was almost caught he prayed for help and God immediately created weeds for the camel to feed upon.

When my father and I reached the city we entered through a gate. Its streets were arched and are very narrow. As we were walking in the hat district I heard the tinkling of bells, which was an indication, as my father informed me, that a caravan was approaching. In a short while I saw the head of the caravan. Father said, "The camels are coming!" I was viewing the camels as they passed by when suddenly the caravan stopped. I, also, stopped, to gaze at what "Moses had created." At this moment my father went ahead and left me standing alone. I soon realized that

I was lost and began shouting for my father. My cries attracted the attention of the shopkeepers, and, in a short time, there was a little crowd looking curiously at me and asking if I had been hurt by any of the camels. Just at that time my father, who was hunting everywhere for me, saw the crowd and came to find out whether I was the one that was attracting the attention. He found me standing beside a big camel, looking at it with wondering eyes, full of tears. In order to keep me from getting lost again he took me by my little hand and never let go of it until I was safely tucked away.

In approaching a Persian city the first sight that will attract the traveler are the high city walls, surrounded with big ditches, and the numerous beggars and cripples of all descriptions loafing about the city gates, asking for alms. Begging has become a science with many of these men. They can tell at a glance whether the passers-by are Christians, Jews or Mo-

hammedans. To Mohammedans they implore by the name of the Prophet to give them something; to Christians they say, "For Christ's sake, help us," and to Jews they mention the name of Moses and Abraham when they ask for assistance. If the beggars are refused, they turn on the passers-by and curse them, saying, "May Allah take your only son," "May Allah burn your home," or "May your father burn in Gehenna." Not infrequently the cripples shake their staves in the face of the strangers who do not help them.

As a traveler passes through the gate of the city the things that will strike his eye are the graveyards and the many poor, lean dogs running from place to place with a bone between their jaws, occasionally stopping long enough to take a few licks, then hiding it in the ground for a future meal. The graveyards are scattered all over the city and by the roadside. The idea of having them in such places is so that those who pass may offer their

prayers for the departed souls. The cemeteries are the gloomiest quarters that I have ever seen in a city. The tombs are covered with weeds and grass, and, occasionally, a wild rose will be seen blooming over "some one's lovely head," but this is eventually eaten by the hungry beasts of burden. The boys, not having any special place provided by the city, frequently use graveyards for their playgrounds.

In short, the graves are trampled upon by everything and by everybody. One can see homeless dogs jumping from tomb to tomb, and goats, sheep, donkeys, and asses eating the weeds and grass.

Perhaps it was of such a scene that Omar, the tentmaker, was thinking when he wrote:

"They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep;
And Bahram, that great Hunter, the wild ass
Stamps over his head, but can not break his sleep."

Let us now pass to the shopping district, which is indeed, with the exception of Teheran, unlike anything that one sees in Europe or in the American cities. The bazars are grouped together according to the commodities they sell. In two or three blocks there is nothing to be seen but shoes and shoe-stores. Another long row of shops is occupied exclusively by the hatters. The tailors and bankers have their own separate quarters. The *Gasapkhana* (slaughtering place) is only for killing animals and for selling meat. *Medonkhana* is a great public square used as a market for such products as wheat, barley, oats, and raisins. This place is adorned with fountains and is paved with stone.

The caravansary takes the place of the hotel and stables. The farmers who come to the city to sell their stock put up, with their cattle, at these great caravansaries.

Topkhana is the armory where all the guns and cannons are stored. It occupies

MARKET IN URUMIAH.

a large area and is used as a drilling-place for the soldiery.

Every storekeeper, with few exceptions, makes his own goods. In the lumber bazars men will be seen holding a saw by its two handles and sawing the wood into boards. Next to them will be carpenters who take the boards and make them into doors and windows. Hatters make their own hats, candy men their own candy. Shoemakers, saddlers, tailors, bakers, chandlers, tinners, braziers, silversmiths, and blacksmiths are busy making and selling their own articles. There is thus no competition between labor and capital as the shopkeeper is both laborer and capitalist.

The merchants have no paid clerks. Their helpers are mere boys who are put there by their parents to learn the trade so that in time they can have establishments of their own. Each shopkeeper has his own price. Sometimes, however, the highly skilled artisans form a union and

agree to sell their articles for a certain amount. Generally speaking, there are no stabilized prices. Each merchant tries to get all he can for his handiwork, and if he receives the price he first asked, he will be sorry that he did not ask for more.

"Jewing" and bargaining are very common. An ordinary merchant will usually ask a hundred per cent more than the real worth of his goods, so that after repeated bargaining he will not incur any losses. A great deal of *Souda* (business) is done in the following manner: The customer will approach the dealer as to the price of an article. The merchant will say, "I will give it to you for five tomans (dollars) and *'Allah ackchin Miftada,"* meaning, "By Allah, the article is free." The customer will then say, *"Man uloon* (I die). What is the real price?" "By Allah," will reply the dealer, "I can not give it to you for any less." *"Atam-Babam,"* (My father and my grandfather) the customer will softly say, "can you not be a little reason-

able? Your price is too high." *"Gor-bonan uloom"* (I am your sacrifice) the dealer will say; "what will you give me for it?" "Two dollars," the customer will reply, "and that is more than it is worth." "Well," the merchant will shout, "do you think I found it? Just feel it, feel it, see how fine it is. This is my own make. Now what will you give me for it?" *"Khir, khir,"* (No, no) the customer will answer, "I can not do *souda* (business) with you, I must see some other *docunder* (merchant)." He will then drop the goods and go his way. Before he has gone many steps the shopkeeper will shout, *"Bora gal, bora gal,"* (come here, come here), at the same time beckoning to him, "I will give it to you for three tomans, *wa's Salam* (that is all)." The customer will then return and, after dickering for a few more minutes, will offer him his price and finally purchase the article, thinking that he has obtained it at a bargain. When the souda is over, if a sale

has been made, the customer and merchant become good friends until their next business meeting. On the other hand, if the customer does not buy anything the merchant will take his shoe or a stick and saying, "Away with you, you kopak (dog), or I will send you to Gehenna," drives him out of the shop.

I frequently used to stop in front of the bazars and watch the shopkeepers bartering with their customers. If one knows their language there is nothing more amusing than to witness a sale, especially that of a donkey or a mule, by a dealer of the lower class.

IX

PERSIAN RUGS AND RUG-MAKERS

In Persia there are no ready-made toys for the girls to play with. They are, therefore, compelled to make their own rag babies. At a very early age little girls collect various colors and shades of cloth from which they make dolls. They also take old stockings and unravel them and save the yarn, out of which they make balls to be used when they are playing on the housetops in the fall of the year. In playing the game the girls strike the ball to the ground with the palm of the hand and then make a quick turn. As it bounces it is given another blow so that the player can make another turn. This is kept up until the ball strikes a stone or a depression and gets beyond the control of the player, or else the girl, on account

of making so many successive turns, falls from dizziness. I have witnessed from 180 to 200 turns being made without catching the ball or letting it fall. These balls are often beautifully ornamented with designs, tiny images of human beings, palm-leaves and birds. The boys also play the game, but they are not so artistic as the girls, and neither do they have the patience to make the balls. So frequently a girl will present to a boy, either through his sister, her chum, or some confidential friend who will keep her secret, a beautiful ball which she has thus made out of yarn and ornamented. In this way the Persian girls have their first lesson in love, sewing, embroidery, and rug-making.

As soon as a girl reaches the age of understanding she is taught fancy weaving. The work of some of these young artists is beautiful. To teach them various designs the beginner is taken by the master of the art into the yard and the designs are drawn on the clay or sand. Sometimes

they are drawn on paper, but paper being generally scarce the first means are invariably employed. When the pupil has mastered the drawing lessons she is shown the arrangement of every thread and the color that should be used. After accomplishing this the student must then make the designs in the rug or embroider them on a piece of cloth without looking at the drawing.

The Incentives to Becoming an Artist

The incentives to becoming an artist in the field of rug-making are indeed manifold. The first and foremost thought is to uphold the family name, the second, that it practically assures a young lady a good marriage, the third and final one, her artistic ability adds to her marriage dower at the final settlement of matrimonial arrangements between herself and her lover.

It is indeed not an unusual thing for a Persian beauty to put from seven to ten

years into the making of a small rug as a gift for a prospective husband. Thus, being a work of love and a work of years, it is natural that, at its completion, it should not only shine like an *Almas* (diamond) but should fulfill all her dreams, hopes and fancies for a happy future.

The Material Used in Rug-Weaving

Wool, cotton, silk, goat's and camel's hair are extensively used in the art of rug-making. The wool is obtained from shearing the sheep and the young Persian lambs. The lamb's wool, on account of its softness, is used in finer Persian rugs. The goats of Kurdistan and the Province of Azerbajin have long, fluffy hair with natural colors of black, white and brown. The hair obtained from these goats can not be surpassed in any part of the world with the exception of the Angora and the Cashmere of Tibet. The camel's hair is obtained mainly from the eastern part of

Persia, as the camels of that locality have long, wooly hair.

All animals that produce rug material[1] are sheared in the spring and fall. The sheep, goats, and Persian lambs after being fed in summer and winter come out of their pens fat and fluffy. They suddenly, however, change their appearance, and it is indeed a sight to see hundreds of these animals, after losing their woolen dress, running up and down the banks of a stream and trimmed all over with the exception of small tufts around the ears.

Cotton-raising is one of the most important industries in Persia. This material is used in rug-making on account of its several advantages. First, it is considered lighter than wool; second, it gives a better foundation on which to tie the

[1] This war has practically destroyed the future Persian and Turkish rug industry, as a large percentage of animals which produced the rug material have been slain for food, and a number of men who prepared this material are now lying dead on the field of battle.

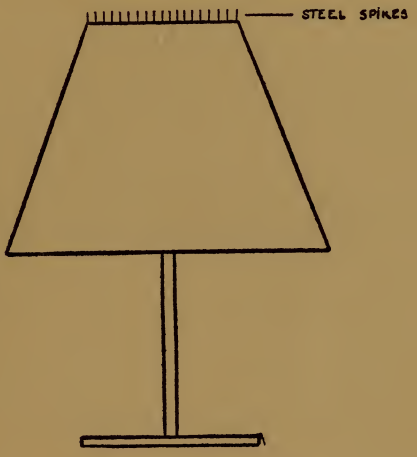
pile; third, it keeps the rugs in better shape, and finally, the most important quality is that moths seldom get in rugs where cotton is used.

The famous Persian *Abresem* (silk) is obtained mainly from the regions bordering the Caspian Sea. In order to produce the silk great precaution is taken to assure the safety of the caterpillars from any danger of cold or noise. Primarily the silk-worms must be kept in a clean room with body temperature, and they must be guarded from all buzzing of flies and mosquitoes.

How the Material is Prepared

When the wool or other material for rug-making is thus obtained, it is put through a process of cleaning. The wool is first soaked in cold water and thoroughly washed until all its impurities have disappeared. It is then spread in the sun until it is well dried, but care is taken not to allow the wool to dry to the extent of los-

ing its natural oil. After the wool has been cleaned it is put through a process of picking to loosen it so it can be spun into yarn. The apparatus for picking shown in the diagram is made of wood.

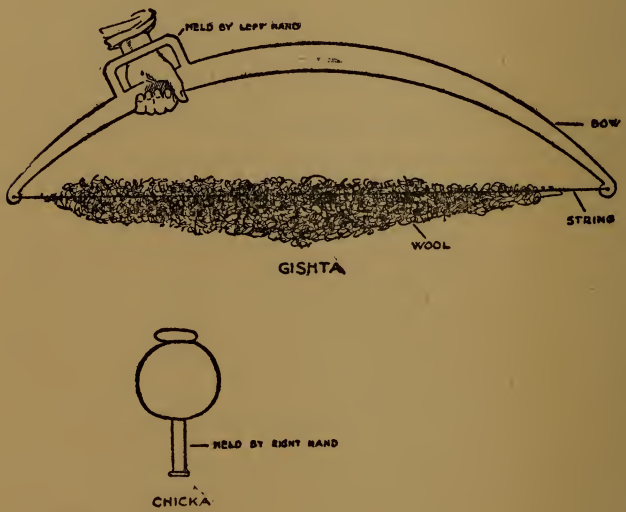


THE WOOL PICKING APPARATUS

The top is full of steel spikes about an inch long. The instrument is placed firmly between the knees, and the wool is repeatedly pulled over the spikes until it is thoroughly mixed.

Another instrument used largely for picking is called by the natives, *Gishta.*

The use of this instrument is a trade and many men make a living by it. In the seasons of wool-shearing and cotton-picking, Gishta-users go from house to house to mix the wool or cotton so that it can be



spun and finally used in making rugs and carpets. This instrument is shown in the diagram and consists of a bow made of wood, about six or seven feet long. The string of it is made of buffalo hide or some unbreakable material. The handle of the

bow is held by the left hand, and the string, while touching the wool or cotton, is pounded with a wooden *chicka* (hammer) held by the right hand. As the string vibrates and springs up and down in the wool it mixes it and makes it ready for the next operation, spinning.

The looms and cotton-gins are so numerous in Persia that they can be found in almost every home. The spinning is done on the hand spinning-wheel by women, especially widows, who are compelled to make their living. The spinners work from four or five o'clock in the morning to the late hours of night, and if they spin during that time one pound of wool it is considered to be a good day's work.

When the wool is spun it is then wound up in large skeins and made ready for the dyers.

The Dyer and the Method of Dyeing

In Persia the dyers can be recognized a long distance off by the color of their

hands. That they are dyers makes them not only exceedingly proud, but they feel quite happy over the fact that their hands show the marks of their profession. The craft is hereditary and it descends as sacred treasure from father to son for generations. The dyers are all men. In the case of a weaver not being able to make or prepare his own dyes, the yarn is taken to one of the dyers and dyed the desired color and shade.

Dyes are prepared from leaves, plants, roots, and the bark of trees, insects, animal blood, vegetables, and flowers. After the colors have been extracted they are put in big pots, boiled, and reboiled, until a satisfactory shade has been obtained. When the dye is ready to be used, the dyer takes one skein of yarn at a time and dips it into the dye until the desired tint has been obtained. It is then taken out and hung over the dye-pot in the sun without being wrung out.

The dyeing season is usually in the lat-

ter part of spring, or at times when the rains do not fall. In passing by the villages one can easily recognize the dyer's home: on his housetop and in the yard there will be seen skeins of yarn of various colors hung on ropes to dry. When there are several dyers in the same village the display of colors is truly picturesque and, to a stranger, it would seem that the village was having a big holiday, or that they were commemorating a great national event.

The dyers that I knew in Persia were the best-hearted men that I ever saw. The boys liked them more than anybody else in the village. We used their yards and housetops as loafing-places, and not infrequently, to get us out of the way when they were working, they gave us colored yarns out of which we made our King David sling-shots.

The Loom and Weaving

The apparatus used in weaving a Persian rug is indeed a very simple and not at all complicated piece of mechanism. The whole loom is made of four rough poles, two of them firmly set in the ground like telephone poles, another placed across these at the top and another at the bottom, thus forming a wooden frame. This is regulated according to the size of the rug. The warp threads are stretched from the top to the bottom pole, with a smooth stick inserted between the threads as a shuttle. When this is done the rug painting begins.

The Persian weaving, like Persian reading and writing, always begins at the right and goes to the left. The craft, on account of requiring small, dainty hands to tie the close knots and stitches, is performed mainly by the delicate fingers of women and girls.

The weavers are very superstitious. They would not think of commencing their

Rug-Weaver at Work.

work without first invoking the blessing of Allah by saying, "*Bismil lah-el Rahemone el Rahum,*" meaning, "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate." When the neighbors come to see their work they are given most wicked looks unless before making any complimentary remarks they say, "Mashallah, Mashallah." Again, to avoid the evil eye of their neighbors or visitors they tie blue beads in the rug and leave the tufts of wool unclipped, not keeping track of how much work they accomplish during the day, or the space they cover. Frequently, upon commencing their work next morning they look to see whether the devils or genii have interfered with their designs. They also believe that genii come at night and do their weaving for them and braid the fringes of their rugs.[1]

[1] We once had a Kurdish servant whose family had been weavers. His name was Sadig, and he was a firm believer in the power the genii exercised over animals. I remember one time some one had braided the mane of a horse while it was in the stable. When the Kurd boy pulled the horse out and saw its mane braided he nearly

One of the principal reasons that a Persian rug is so durable and lasting is the method of knotting. Every knot is made separately so that in case it should come out it would not affect other knots or rows in the rug.

How Long Does It Take To Make a Persian Rug?

The question of how long it takes to make a Persian rug has been asked frequently. For this reason I will give as an example how much time and labor it requires to make one of the standard American size. A 9 x 12 rug made in Persia by a fine weaver would have at least 400 handmade knots to the square inch, or 6,220,800 knots when completed. In tying the knots the weaver must exercise a great deal of skill and care, so it is very doubtful that even the fastest and most expert weavers can tie more than three knots per minute.

fainted. He was afraid to ride it for fear that genii had ridden the beast.

Therefore if a weaver works eight hours every day in the year it will take eleven years, ten months and five days to complete this piece of work.

How the Persian Rugs Are Named and Classified

The Persian rugs take the names of districts or cities in which they are made. For example, the Tabriz rug is called by that name because it is made in the city of Tabriz. The Teheran rug is made in the Persian capital city, the Sheraz rug in the city of Sheraz. Sometimes erroneously the rugs are named from the city in which they were sold or shipped, such as "Kirmanshah" rugs. There are thousands of Kirman rugs that are sold as "Kirmanshah" simply because that was the last place from which the rugs were purchased.

The rugs are also classified according to their weave and grade. The following are the most important rugs made in Per-

sia and exported largely to England and the United States:

Senna, Sorrook, Kirmanshah, Kashan, Tabriz, Kirman, Sheraz, Teheran or Irani, Khorassan, Saraband, Herat, Ferogan, Hamadan, Kurdistan, Ispahan and Sultanabad.

Until recent years very few weavers wove rugs with the idea of selling them. Rugs were made primarily for the use of the family. Occasionally, however, when a friend or stranger admired the precious article to the extent of causing the "evil eye" to come upon it and on the family that owned it, the rug was either given away or sold for a few pieces of silver. The rugs that we had were mainly bought or presented to my grandfather by Kurdish chieftains. Some of the rugs which we used in our house have not, as yet, to my knowledge, found a place in the American market.

These are large felt carpets called by the natives, "Lumta." They are made,

not by weaving, but by beating the wool together and then pressing it. They are very thick, warm and noiseless, with red, cream, and white borders. The field of these carpets is frequently dotted with red, black, white, green, blue and golden circles of wool. Besides felt carpets there were also long, narrow rugs from 4 x 12 feet and upward. I once asked my father to tell me how much some of these rugs cost. The one 4 x 12 I was told cost originally about $2.40, and the largest ones that I saw never cost more than $18 in American money. I believe that, even now, the rugs can be bought at a very low price, but strangers or rug agents who are not acquainted with the character and customs of the Kurds and other fastidious rug-owners, would be subject to robbery and many great disappointments in purchasing these rugs from the homes of the owners.

The Character and Customs of Some of the Rug-Makers

The reader will no doubt be interested in having first-hand information with regard to the character and customs of these Kurds [1] who are by far the greatest rug-makers in northern Persia.

The origin of the Kurds has not been satisfactorily settled, but it is believed that in their veins flows the blood of the Chaldeans, Babylonians, and Assyrians. In early times the Kurds preferred the mountains as their place of habitation, and took great pride then as they do now in being called "Gurdu," a title which signifies "warrior." To-day they are better known in the Occident as "Kurds," and number about two million, five hundred thousand [2]

[1] The author has used a few extracts from his article on Kurds published in the *Review of Reviews*, March issue, 1916.

[2] There are no means by which we can obtain with accuracy the exact population of the Kurds, for neither in Persia nor in Turkey has a Government Census Bureau been established.

persons, having their abode mostly in Kurdistan. Their land, which is extremely mountainous, rises to the east of the upper Tigris, in the direction of Urumiah. The area of this space is sixty thousand square miles. There is not a mile of railway in the whole country, and neither is there a road fit for traveling except by caravan.

No people are more mistrusted by the Persians and the Turks than the Kurds. They do not consider a man's religion and standing; they would rob a Turk or a Persian as well as an Armenian or a Greek should he happen to be a stranger to them. Of two million, five hundred thousand Kurds there is no one who calls himself lawgiver and ruler. There is no one who assumes the authority to punish his fellow Kurd. Law with a Kurd is a personal matter. Each individual considers himself his own king and prince. A monarchy of self-control is unknown among them. In short, the Kurdish mind is his constitution, his gun and saber the means by which

he enforces law and justice, and the Ottoman Porte or the Persian Shah has no power to interfere with him.

Allegiance of any description is, according to philosophers like Rousseau, a folly if not a crime, and quite beneath the dignity of a human being. Such is the philosophy of the Kurds. They love personal liberty and under no condition will they willingly subject themselves to any ruler. The Kurds take no interest in modern reforms. They dislike the light of civilization. We hear of every known nationality and people in America except the Kurds. They have no established homes. In summer they live in tents of goat's hair, on the mountain-tops, and establish their rug studios in the open air, and under the inspiration of God's great out-of-doors they weave excellently designed rugs. In winter the Kurds descend to lower lands and live in villages in houses made out of mud. Their fare is of the

simplest, their usual diet consisting of bread and buttermilk, and cheese made of goat's milk. They have experienced little change since Noah's Ark rested on Mount Ararat.

James Bryce, in his "Transcaucasia and Ararat," p. 256, gives a graphic picture of the Kurds:

"Through the empires of Assyria and Persia and Macedon, through Parthian Arsocidae and Iranian Sassanidæ, through the reigns of Arabian Caliphs and Turkish Sultans and Persian Shahs, these Kurds have roamed as they roam now over the slopes of the everlasting mountains, watering their flocks at this spring, pitching their goat's hair tents in the recesses of these lonely rocks, chanting their mildly pathetic airs with neither a past to remember nor a future to plan for."

Occasionally some queer stories have been told by visitors to Kurdistan. One of these remains in my memory as exemplifying the schooling of a young Kurd. My grandfather, who used to make frequent

trips to Kurdistan, related the following conversation with a Kurdish chieftain:

"You have several sons, I understand?"

"Yes," answered the chief.

"Are they all married?"

"All but poor Ali, and no girl will marry him because he is not a successful thief and robber."

"Well, what are you going to do about it?"

"Oh, I have advised him," responded the chief, "to carry with him a gun and a sword, and I have explicitly impressed upon his mind that no matter how bloody and evil the deed he might commit, it will only add respect and honor to his name and family."

Such is the advice of the Kurdish father to his son. The word "kill" is the most used term in the whole Kurdish vocabulary. If the Kurds engage in conversation it is not very long before one who may be listening, even though he may know nothing of the language, detects the words:

"Allah ackchin ulderim,"[1] "By Allah, I will kill him." Living so close to Kurdistan as I did we boys frequently got into skirmishes with the young Kurds, and it was very unusual, on such occasions, to find a young Kurd without a King David slingshot and a club in his hand, a dagger in his belt, or a gun on his shoulder.

Sometimes these Kurds, when in need of a horse or gun, take their rugs, usually to the smaller towns, and offer them for sale at a very low price. The bargain, however, often proves quite disastrous. In selling their rugs the Kurds generally find out who holds the largest purse in the village, and after purchasing their horses and necessary fighting implements, they attack the village, plunder the inhabitants, and steal their own rugs back.

[1] The words, "Allah ackchin ulderim," are Turkish, as the Kurdish language is largely intermingled with Turkish, Arabic, and Persian.

X

PREPARATIONS FOR A FAR JOURNEY

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a word of it.

I HAVE been frequently asked why I came to America. There are several reasons which offer themselves in answer to this question. Primarily, my leaving home was brought about by the death of my mother. Secondly, as I grew older, the despotic government, and the ill-treatment of Persian subjects by officials became quite objectionable. Thirdly, and finally, I was told of great opportunities for young men in America in the field of education, science, and industry, which fact, after having lived in the States for half my life, I

fully appreciate. In leaving Persia I was not actuated by any material motives. At that time I was too young, as most boys are, to give this phase of the subject serious consideration. In fact, I had never made a cent in my life and neither did I know how to go about making one. Furthermore, the fear of ever getting stranded in America never entered my mind. To show my inexperience in handling money, let me relate an incident of my trip: Soon after I reached Russia, while in Tifliz, I met a man who said that he knew my family and advised me to give him my money to keep as there were so many pickpockets about. When I was informed of this fact, even though he was a total stranger to me, I immediately gave him all the money I had, with the exception of some small change. I then went to my *menzil* (stopping-place) and he went on his own way. I was in Tifliz about two weeks and I saw this gentleman from time to time, but I never asked him what he was

doing with my money. On the last day of my stay in Tifliz he returned it to me and took me to the station, wishing me God-speed on my far journey. This man could have disappeared easily with what I gave him, of course, but I had never had any personal experience with a dishonest man, and I am glad that I was not disillusioned at that time.

It is thus seen that I came to America, not to enrich myself, but to go where I thought I would be happy. If my mother had lived, there is no doubt in my mind that no earthly ambition nor even the hardships endured in living under a despotic government could have induced me to leave the old hills and vineyards of that little village in Persia. The relation which existed between my mother and myself was very singular. I could not do without her for any length of time, as I was absolutely devoted to her. When school closed for the day, instead of stopping to play with the boys I went home to

see her. If she were not there I ran to my grandmother's house, where I was almost sure to see her, but if she did not happen to be there, I visited all the neighbors' homes until I found her. I much preferred staying with her to playing with my comrades, and sometimes she had to compel me to go out and mix with other boys.

It was not the same with my father. As long as mother and I were together I never missed him. At times I was even glad when he went to the city and left us alone. When the two had any argument or discussion (which was indeed very seldom), I always took Mother's part. Of course I could not tell who was right, but I was for Mother, right or wrong.

Mother's health was shattered at the time of my birth. She never really regained it, even with all the American as well as the native treatment. Toward the end she became very frail and experienced a vast physical change. But even while

she was losing the bloom of her youth, to my knowledge my father never lost his devotion to her. He was always kind and courteous, and did all he could to improve her health. One day, in the latter part of the autumn, she passed away a few hours after the sun had gone down. Her last words to me were: "Obey your father." As the poet, Hafiz, says, she "sought a lodging in the grave too soon," for she died at the age of thirty-six.

At the death of my mother I was about fourteen years old, just at the age when I needed her most. At this time I felt extremely bitter with regard to life. It did not seem reasonable that my mother and I should part forever when we had been so happy together. It grieved me so that, for a long time after her death, I never neglected to pay my daily visit to her sepulcher. I performed this humble pilgrimage to her shrine in all kinds of weather, wishing to die also, so I could be with her in heaven.

Her death suddenly transformed me from a mere child into a man. I lost all interest in my early games. Instead of playing tops, marbles and "Hat in the Ring" with my crowd, I watched them play. I took no pleasure in cock fights, neither did I attempt to train game roosters as I had done before. Life became a serious proposition. I wanted to live in such a manner in future so as to be a credit to my mother.

Father and I, after the death of my mother, were left alone, and during that time we became very companionable. But my father was still a young man, so, after remaining a widower for a reasonable period, he was married again, to a good woman whom we all knew. My new mother was very kind to me, too kind, in fact. She let me have my own way, in and out of the house, in every respect. Quite frequently I did things for which I would have been scolded by my own mother, but my stepmother passed them by as though

they were nothing. My father, for fear of hurting my feelings, also overlooked all my faults. This really hurt me. I felt very unhappy. My new mother never scolded me for anything except a failure on my part to take a bath at regular intervals; then she used to put me in the tub and scrub me as my own mother used to do.

A Badly Governed Land [1]

Tyrants who on their people fall
Sap their own State's foundation wall.

In addition to my grief I had the misfortune to live under a despotic and tyrannical form of government which I greatly disliked. As a boy I despised the idea of bakshish, and the practice of buying and selling government offices, and, especially, the maltreatment of the peasantry.

Rousseau, the Genevan philosopher,

[1] The author has not hesitated to use a few lines from an article contributed by him to the American *Review of Reviews* on Persia, June issue, 1916.

says: "It would be hard for a man to whom the state has been sold not to sell it in his turn and indemnify himself out of the helplessness for the money which the powerful have extorted from him." [1] This is the greatest evil in the Persian Government. But the practice of bakshish is quite necessary for the political grafters of the Orient, for without it no one can hold a Government position. The system can, perhaps, be best explained by a hypothetical case.

Let us suppose, for instance, that the reader is worth a million dollars and is seeking the position of vizier. The first step would be to present a good-sized purse to an official, who would then take great pleasure in introducing you to his superior, and you continue making gifts to all the officials until, finally, you are introduced to the royal family. The bakshish has to be given to all the princes and to the Shah. If the purse and your personality

[1] "The Social Contract"; pp. 165–166.

please his Royal Highness, your position is assured.

As soon as you have secured the coveted position you recoup yourself by reversing the process: from being a giver you become a receiver. If the office means gubernatorial appointment, then your hope comes from the appointment of various officials for collecting the taxes. The collectors, in order to maintain their own state, and to meet the usual bakshish of the governor, are compelled to extort a much higher sum than is expected by their chief. Here then, comes the sad part of the Persian administrative system. All the burden falls upon the poor and the peasant.

The government has never done anything that would make the inhabitants of Persia happy. Its officials, figuratively speaking, are like lilies of the field, "They toil not, neither do they spin," and we are not putting it too strongly when we quote that "even Solomon in all his glory was not

arrayed like one of these." All the palaces and castles were built by their poor subjects. Every Persian is compelled to serve one of these lords several days in the year without pay. Besides this, all the work in Persia, from the sowing of the seed to the threshing of the wheat, and from the weaving of a rug to the finishing of a pack-saddle was, and is, performed by the hands of the weary people.

When the governor received his appointment the Teheran government knew how much money and produce should be furnished by him, but it had no knowledge of the sources from which he derived the tax which was delivered to the Shah's treasury.

In Persia, land, fruit, trees, springs, hay, beasts of burden, cattle, sheep, goats, even chickens—everything is taxable. If you raise ten chickens you give two to the tax collector, fifty cents for each sheep or goat, one dollar for each buffalo, horse, camel or cow. This has been gradually raised year

after year. The poll tax of a dollar and a half is levied on every boy after sixteen years of age.

Sometimes the tax collectors come at a very trying season when the people have no money with which to pay. They desert their homes and disappear for weeks at a time. In fact some of the poorer class, who have been unjustly treated, live together in houses built in a cluster under the ground, with a communicating passage known only to themselves. The result is that the tax-collectors, though they see nothing but a grass-covered hut, may be actually in the midst of several tax-dodgers. If caught, of course they are punished most severely. I have seen poor people run out of their homes by the tax collectors and clubbed on the back and head because they had no money to pay their taxes.[1]

[1] When the tax collectors come to villages they make themselves perfectly at home with everything that people have. When Grandfather Mirza was Ketkhoda I

The maltreatment of the people for not being able to meet the demands of their superiors is not limited to the peasant class. Here we have the words of that eminent British historian, Malcolm, who was, in the days of Aga Mahmut Khan, an English Minister to the Persian Court. He says, "One of his ministers, Hadji Ibraham, was kept under the direct rays of the sun without a turban for several hours until he agreed to pay a sum that had been demanded of him."

Thinking About America and Studying English

I, personally, did not propose to be treated either as a peasant or a vizier in Persia. In order to avoid this I decided to go where there were no kings and princes and where every one was the master of himself, the king of his own soul.

was told that he clubbed one of these officials on that account.

America was not an unknown country to me. I had read about it frequently and I had an aunt who, with her husband and two children, had been studying in the United States for several years. I also had an uncle who came to America to study medicine. We used to receive letters and presents from them. Upon one occasion my uncle sent me a little pearl penknife with two tiny blades. It was the smallest cutting instrument the villagers had ever seen. The boys and even grown men came from all over the surrounding country to see it. It disappeared within a week, and as usual, this was blamed on the evil eye by my companions. These little presents had a charm for me; I wanted to see the country where they were made.

When, with the consent of my father, I finally decided to come to America, I began learning English with the greatest diligence. I studied with my aunt, who, although she had never been out of her own country, by tutoring had become con-

siderable of an English scholar. I had a primer which I carried with me wherever I went. I studied it under the trees, in our vineyards, and beside the limpid waters of our village stream. On my way to and from the hay-fields I counted the trees in English. Another method which I discovered to be a great help in learning the language was to compare the Bible in English with that in Turkish and Syriac.

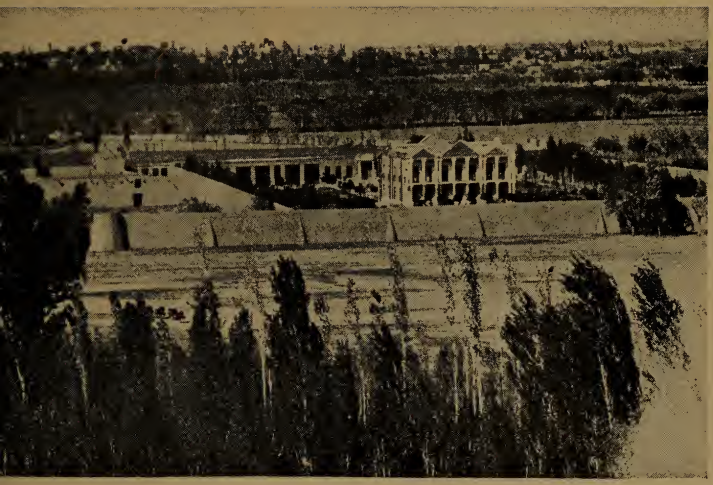
When the time came for me to leave, my father took me to the city to a tailor, had me fitted with European attire, and made the arrangements for my passport. We then returned home and waited for the final adieu.

My Departure

After being provided by my father with sufficient means for my journey, I left my home in the month of May. The day before my departure I went first to the tomb of my mother, where I placed a wreath, and then from orchard to orchard, and from

vineyard to vineyard, taking my last look at the land where my mother's foot had pressed. Then I went to pay my last calls on my relatives and friends. At this time I felt exceedingly blue. Everywhere I went the good people cried, and when I came home I found my father and my stepmother shedding tears. Father knew more about the dangers and temptations that befall a boy and young man than I did. This worried him, as he did not know how I was going to conduct myself when I was miles from home, away from my parents' influence. The following advice was impressed upon me: "Be honest, work hard, remember your God, and keep away from temptation."

Having paid my calls and performed my last rites at the grave of my mother, I packed all my belongings, and with a few friends and relatives, and my chum, whose name was "Davod," I started to Urumiah, a city conceded to be the birthplace of Zurdish, commonly called "Zoroaster," to



A Country House in Persia.

General View of Urumiah.

meet the party that was leaving for America.

Traveling Through Persia

Our party comprised seven boys, all except two less than twenty years old. At Urumiah we hired a *charwadar* who made the trip repeatedly from that city to the Russian border. He was therefore well acquainted with the road and the Kurds and brigands. I believe he had an understanding with the highway robbers not to attack any of his parties. The charwadar furnished a four-wheeled wagon painted dark red. It was drawn by four horses. There were no seats and no cover to protect us from the rain. In traveling the boys sat on their blankets and hung their feet over the sides as though they were having a straw-ride. When climbing hills the charwadar ordered us to get off and walk, and we obeyed him.

This charwadar was a man nearly fifty years old, and was full of fighting spirit.

He wore a Cossack hat and a uniform which fairly bristled with cartridges. In fact, as one looked at his saber, gun, and all the ammunition fastened all over his body, one would imagine that he was a highwayman himself. But quite the contrary was the fact. He took care of us like his own children, when he could have robbed us and enriched himself with hundreds of dollars.

In the evenings and during the whole journey he entertained us by telling of wonderful fights and experiences he had had with robbers on these trips. We enjoyed hearing all this, but we did not know what might happen next. When we came to a certain bank, hill or high wall, he would inform us that they were dangerous spots as frequently the thieves attacked travelers from behind such places. At times we used to get quite excited, and to quiet us he used to pat his gun and saber, and admonish us not to be afraid for there was nothing that could happen while he was with us. We were good to him, as he was

to us. Although we never entered into any agreement to furnish him with meals, we gave him his food as an *artickh teka,* meaning "an extra bite."

Our meal-hours and halting-places were determined according to the presence of water, shade, and tea-houses. In Persia nearly every three or four miles there is a tea-house, and, whenever we came to one of these places, almost always one of the boys wanted to get off and have some tea and a cheese sandwich. To this the charwadar never offered any objection, and, to keep his good will, we never neglected to give him the first cup and sandwich. When we were unable to get to a tea-house and became fatigued on the road we reclined under an acacia, a cypress or a sycamore tree and quenched our thirst with limpid water, which was indeed quite plentiful even in a dry country like Persia.

Our day's journey was not governed by the distance traveled but by the convenience of our chief and the nearness of a

caravansary for passing the night. When we reached a caravansary the charwadar showed us where to deposit our baggage, so that, in the morning, when he waked us up we would know where to get it. We usually started our day's journey long before light, between three and four o'clock. The chief, in his most military manner, superintended the loading of the goods. After traveling from town to town and menzil to menzil for three days, we reached the great city of Hamadan.

In the Hamadan Caravansary

Think, in this batter'd Caravanserai
Whose portals are alternate night and day
How Sultan after Sultan, with his pomp,
Abode his destin'd hour, and went his way.

Hamadan is one of the most important commercial cities in Persia. It is renowned for its past and glorious history. Here we have the sepulcher of Mordecai and Queen Esther, and in this locality there is also the tomb of the Prophet

Daniel. It was here that Darius and Xerxes established their palaces. Hamadan is the ancient Ecbatana, the famous capital of the Medes and Persians. What a great honor to be standing on the ground where the noted heroes of the land of my nativity made their abodes, planned their great strategies, and fought their great battles twenty-five hundred years ago!

The great caravansary at Hamadan is open to everything and everybody. It is a square building, exhibiting for an outsider nothing but four walls and a tower in front. It has one huge gate, and, as you enter it, the first object that presents itself is a fountain in the court. The huge building is divided into lofty, arched apartments, which are occupied by travelers according to their means. There can be seen caravans and other travelers, devotees mostly, making pilgrimages to or returning from Mecca, Medina, and other holy places. Each traveler carries his own bedding. We each had a good blanket and

a wide tapestry. The caravansaries are usually infested with vermin and poisonous bugs and the one in Hamadan was no exception. So for safety we were compelled to fix our own beds according to our ideas of comfort. The animals were packed in the courtyard and those that were of a vicious temperament were tied to stout posts.

In the morning every one was up before daybreak. The caravan leaders and merchants, with their camels and asses, were hurrying and shouting, each trying to go ahead of his fellow traveler. The horses, donkeys, camels, and mules each were battering away on the floor of the great court with their hoofs and braying according to their particular species. If a state official were in the caravansary, the noise of men would not be so great for fear that he might at any time call them to account and inflict a fine and punishment for disturbing his nightly rest.

Seeing Mount Ararat, and the End of My Journey in Persia

We were destined to stay in the Hamadan Caravansary just for one night. Next day, as usual, we were up by dawn and started the journey while the day was cool. By the roadside we saw the devotees facing Mecca and praying: *"La Allahe el Allah va Mohammed rasul Allah,"* meaning there is only one God and Mohammed is the Prophet of God. We frequently came across high hills of ashes, the ancient remains of fire-worshipers in the Hamadan district.

Mount Ararat, on account of its Biblical history, afforded more interest and occupied the attention of all to a greater extent than any other scenery along the way. I saw it within a distance, I believe, of two miles. When I was told by our charwadar, "There is Mount Ararat," I kept my eyes on it until the view of its snowy top disappeared in the clear horizon.

Our journey across Persia lasted seven days. The weather was cool and delightful. The land was dotted with tulips, hyacinths, irises, bluebells, buttercups, crocuses, hallalies [1] and fragrant herbs. Far away we saw jungles, great and small mountains, silvery streams and fertile valleys. At night we were frequently entertained by the bulbul (nightingale), which sang charmingly in the trees.

The whole trip was very picturesque and beautiful. I have never seen anything like it. It indeed surpasses the natural scenery of Maine, or the White Mountains.

Thus I traveled with my good companions and faithful charwadar until I reached the banks of Aras, the ancient Araxes,[2] which forms the boundary line

[1] This flower I have not seen in America.

[2] "In the classic writers," says Prof. A. V. W. Jackson, "this river was proverbial for its swift current, whose rushing descent from Armenian Mountains carried away the bridges in the winter time, so that Virgil calls it the stream intolerant of any span: "Pontem indignatus Araxes"; Virgil, Æneid, 8, 728; "Persia Past and Present," p. 22.

between Persia and Russia. After being detained a little while by the customs inspectors, I boarded a ferry and was conducted across the river to the Russian frontier, which cut me off from my native land and ended my boyhood days in Persia.

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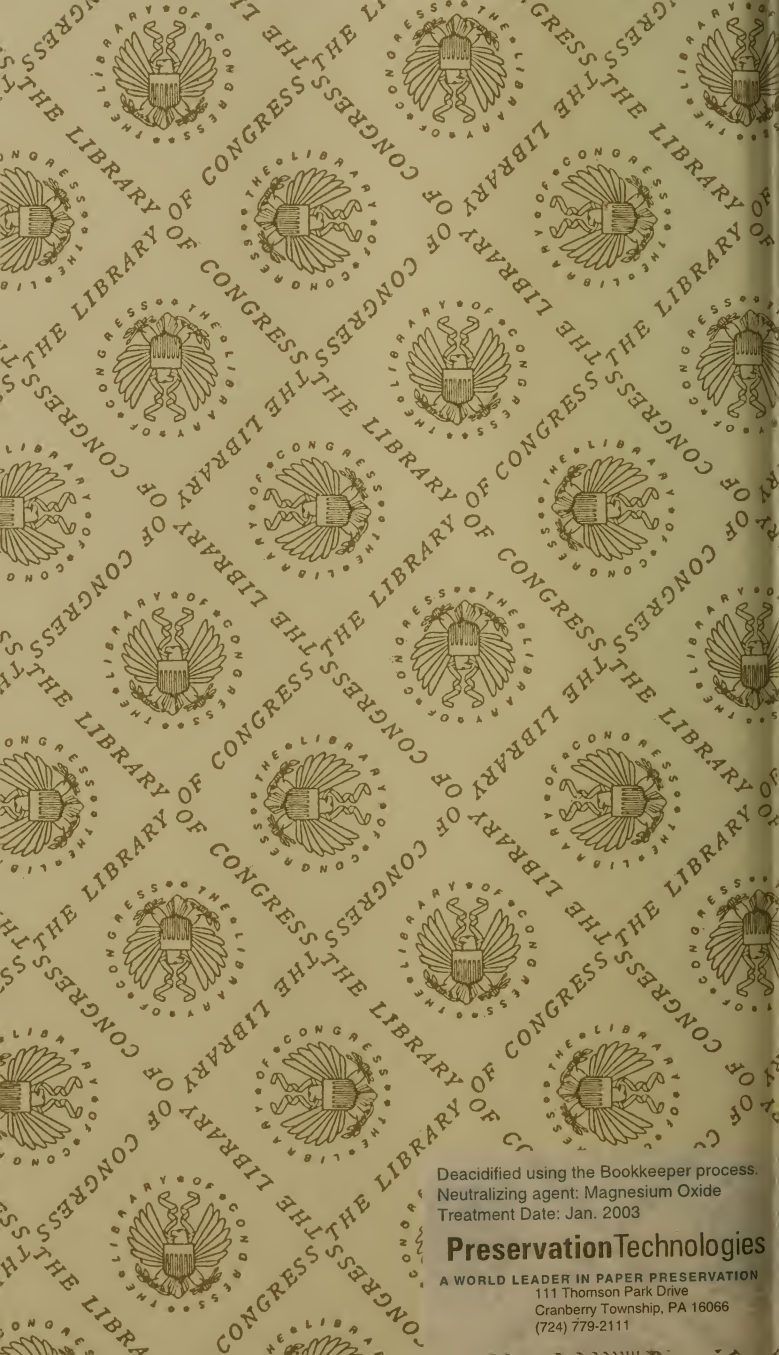

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